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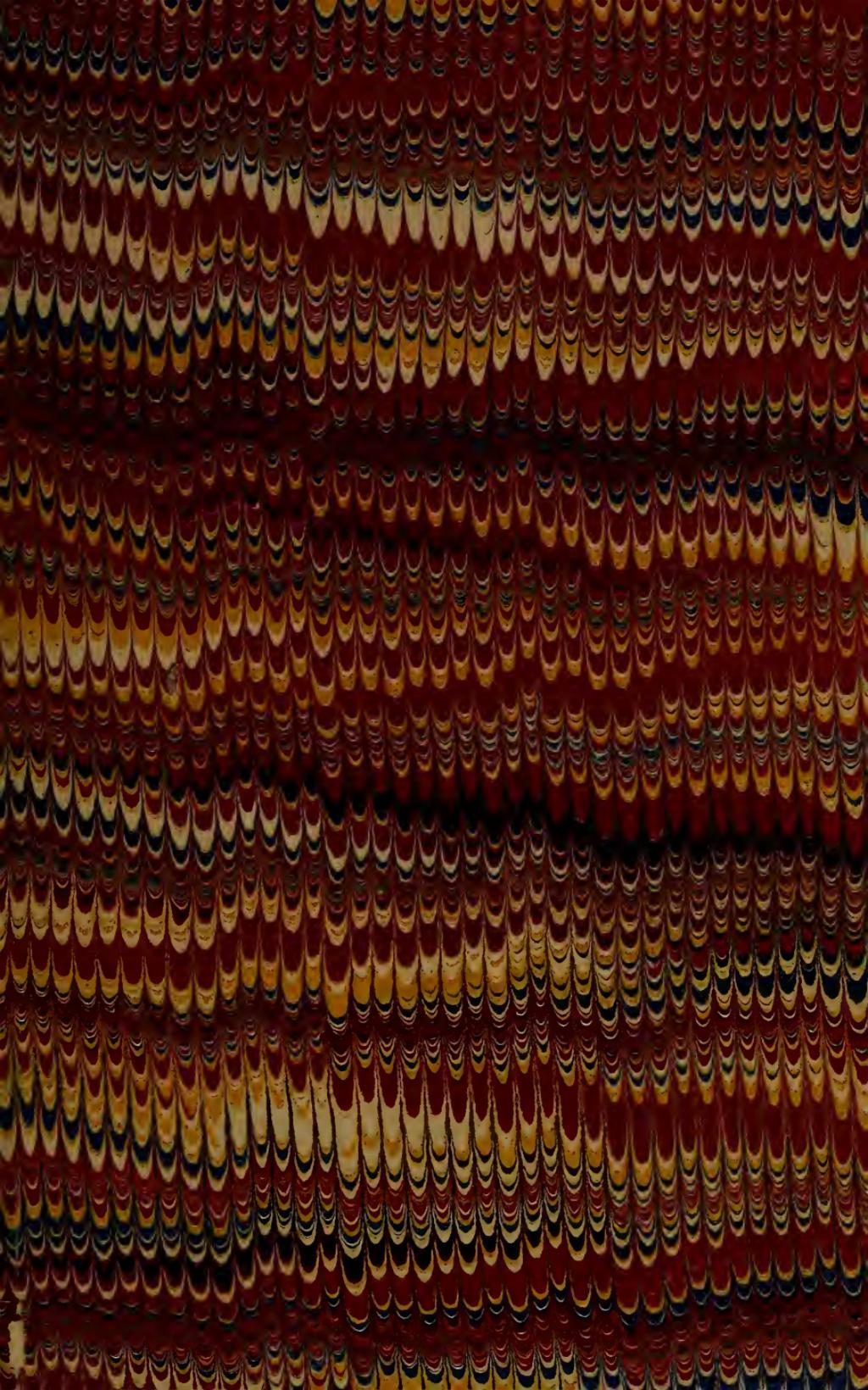


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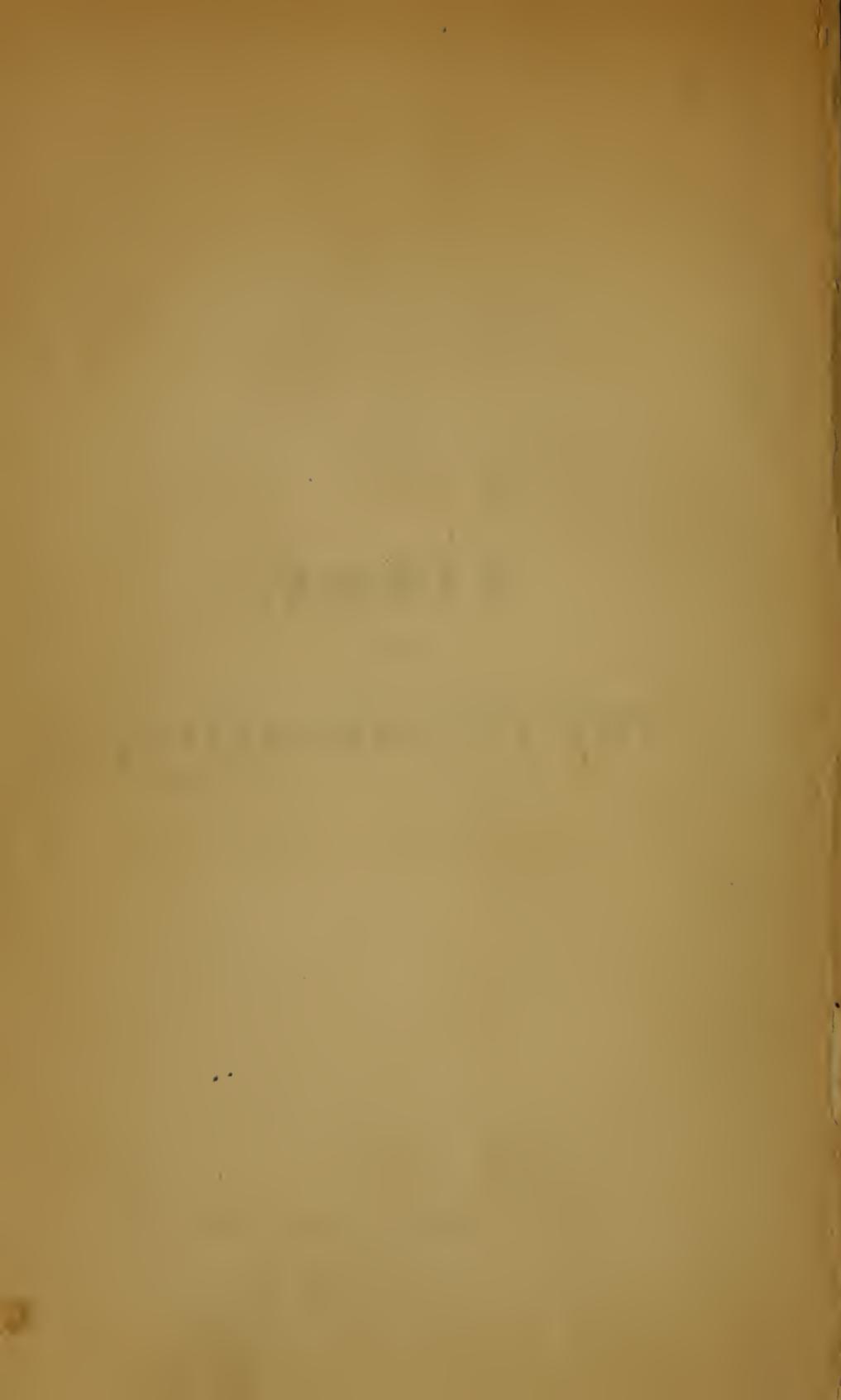




Z A M B A ,

O R

THE INSURRECTION.



ZAMBIA,

OR

THE INSURRECTION.

A DRAMATIC POEM,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

MRS. ELIZABETH RICORD,

AUTHOR OF "ELEMENTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND APPLIED
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT AND FEELING."



CAMBRIDGE:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN OWEN.

1842.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Drama was sketched during a residence of several years in the West Indies, where the action is supposed to take place. Making allowance for poetic embellishment, it is, except in one circumstance, founded on facts connected with individual history. The piece, having been imagined, and even traced out, at least twenty years ago, such as it is now presented to the public, has no relation to the sentiments on the subject of slavery, that, of late, have excited such interest in our republic. My design in the selection of this subject was, when I commenced this drama, and still is, to exhibit the influence that Evangelical Christianity might exercise over all classes of society, from the highest station of arrogant affluence, to the lowest stage of degraded poverty.

It may be necessary to state, that many of the Planters in the French Islands are from the ex-nobility of that nation, and, with their titles, preserve an aristocratical stateliness, in their domestic establishments, in keeping with such rank. The circumstance of exercising unlimited control over so many abject dependents, together with a total want of even the semblance of religious principle, renders them exceedingly despotic. In these Islands, neither the sanctity nor the rest of the Sabbath is observed ; but on that day the slaves usually work in the grounds allotted them as their own provision gardens, or sell their available merchandise. On some plantations, the indolent are obliged, even by stripes, thus to labor for themselves. They are taught nothing of the duties springing from Christianity, although some of the ceremonies of Catholicism are observed by the slaves. These poor degraded people, as may well be supposed, are superstitious and often very corrupt. Those who are from Africa, sometimes mingle their Fetish or heathen customs with false notions of the Christian religion. Hence the use of charms and poison with a blind reverence of what they esteem supernatural power in some impostor among them.

This person is commonly an artful, intelligent negro man or woman, who, obtaining a knowledge of plants, uses them with mischievous intent, for gain, malice, or revenge.

The practice of administering poison to the most valuable slaves on an estate, as well as to the cattle, is not uncommon, and the punishment which succeeds is often terribly cruel. The suspected are not unfrequently tortured to extort confession. Cases of this kind fell, most painfully, under my own observation. The instigator to this mischief was sometimes the most favored slave.

Zamba, who is represented so passionate, tender, and elevated, is a character nevertheless true to nature. In those Islands, native Africans are sometimes seen, beautiful in person, proud in bearing, delicate in tenderness, and of surprising acuteness of intellect. One such, of princely rank, I knew, from the Mendi country. The belief expressed by Zamba, of meeting after death the spirit of his wife upon the waters, and their return to their own country, is a Mendian superstition ; suicide is oftentimes its consequence.

That Nature has her noblemen among every race of

the human family, who can doubt? Even in the most degraded rank,—the rank of the slave,—is sometimes found a soul more free and noble than many a one inhabiting the form of royalty. St. Cloud was the slave and valet of a rich planter, when the French Revolution overthrew the rank, and confiscated the property, of the rich and high-born in the territories of France. In this, one of the richest of its Islands, the slaves, declared free by the Convention, were embodied in the army, and many fine estates were apportioned among them. St. Cloud, who was a brave and fine fellow, received a commission in the army and a plantation; while his aged master was stripped both of rank and property, and left, without a family, in a most destitute and pitiable condition. St. Cloud came to his assistance, allotted to him from his own means a pension as long as he lived; and even, it is said, bestowed upon his poor and feeble master, each morning, the service which he had been accustomed in the days of his slavery to render,—the service of a valet. St. Cloud was personally known to me as a most respectable planter.

The Insurrection, upon which the plot of this Dramatic Poem is founded, occurred many years ago in the Island

of Martinique. A providential discovery on the eve of the intended massacre, saved the inhabitants of a populous city from sudden destruction. Ambition in two master spirits, one a Haytian negro, the other a free mulatto, nearly resulted in a catastrophe, the thought of which, filled those who must have been its victims, with horror.

During the reign of Louis the Eighteenth, the period of the supposed action of this Drama, Romanism having revived in France, intolerance of the Protestant faith was renewed. The idea, therefore, of a missionary being at that time established in one of its Islands, is entirely fictitious. Could this however have been true, no doubt the treatment he might have received from many of the planters, would be analogous to what is here imagined. A private proposal was at that period made from proper authority, in the City of New York, to sound them on the subject of a mission from a society there, and this answer was returned by one of the best educated and freest from sectarian prejudice, “God forbid that the American Republic should here disseminate its religious and political opinions! We cannot admit them.” In this sentiment, perhaps worldly policy had

even a greater share than papacy itself. Each proprietor, being in effect a petty sovereign, exercised, on his own domain, a power uncontrolled by the civil government, even over the lives of his slaves : it was for this cause they dreaded the influence of our liberal principles, and not on account of their own religious sentiments. Few of the higher classes professed any better religion than that of Voltaire, but from many minds Evangelical Christianity drew forth high approval. "Mother," said a planter in my hearing, to his parent, "you have the same ten commandments that Protestants obey ; why then do you on Sunday go from mass to the card table, and spend the remainder of the day in amusement ? They act consistently with their profession when they keep the whole day sacredly, you Catholics do not. I make no profession, and do as I please." .

But even in those dark habitations of cruelty, there are souls that would receive the Word of Truth, were it presented to them, as the hungry would receive bread. Louise Soubiese, *La bonne Louise*, as she was called, was a free mulatto woman. Having received from me a French Testament, she came, some time after, with the expression of her thanks. "Ah," said she, "how I desire

the whole Bible! My son," she added, "says it must be a Divine Book, for since he has read it, he dares no longer indulge in the passions and actions he formerly thought right. He fears the judgments of God." She said the ladies De L—— had borrowed her Testament, and were so delighted with it, she could scarce obtain a sight of it, and ended by expressing her ardent desire to procure the Word of God entire. Poor Louise! I cannot refrain from giving my testimony to worth rarely met with, in any land, or among people of any color. Sincerely did I lament, that I had not a spare copy of the Bible in the tongue she understood; all I carried having been distributed. Affecting instances of this thirst for the Water of Life might be mentioned; may heavenly showers soon fall upon this barren and desolate region!

Having occasionally, through the solicitation of friends, published short portions of this Poem, though not in dramatic form, I am encouraged, from their successful reception, to offer to the public the entire Drama.

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 1, 1842.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COUNT DE NOUVILLE, *a Planter.*

AUGUSTUS, *Count Clermont, Ward of De Nouville.*

MR. LAWTON, *a Protestant Missionary.*

ZAMBA, *an African Prince, now Slave of De Nouville.*

ALPHONSE, *a free Mulatto in the service of the Baroness
of Belfont.*

BARONESS OF BELFONT, *aunt of Augustus.*

ZELIA, *daughter of Count De Nouville.*

NORA, *attendant on Zelia.*

Servants, Slaves, &c.

SCENE laid in an Island of the West Indies.

Z A M B A.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Seashore : a declivity extending to the shore, covered with trees and flowering shrubs. A large and low mansion appears on the summit of the hill, a cottage below it, near the sea. Sunrise.*

ZELIA (*descending the hill*).

How fresh and calm is nature at this hour !

Covered with gems of morn, the opening buds
Send forth their fragrant incense to young day.

A golden cloud hangs o'er the azure flood,
Unruffled by the breeze. Glorious the light
That sudden bursts upon the deep dark wave !
Now a molten mirror. Flashing it strikes
From peak to peak of yonder mountain, clad

In the fleece of heaven. The looms of Tyre, drapery
So rich, ne'er gave to couch of royalty.

(*She sings.*)

SONG.

See round yon mountain's lofty brow
The varying clouds at play ;
Of every changing hue and shape
Tinged by the orb of day.
Upon that mountain's sunny side
Sweets fling their odors free ;
From spicy grove, from citron bower,
And fragrant orange tree.

Though on yon mountain's sunny side
Glow gems of beauty rare,
Yet bondage rolls a bitter tide,
And woe is nurtured there.
O, then, in my sweet humble vale,
With virtue I would live,

Contented with the simple joys

Nature and freedom give.

That vale was childhood's peaceful home :

Where in tranquillity

I passed the cloudless morn of life,

With hope, — most joyously !

But now old ocean's stormy flood

Divides that vale from me,

And memory alone doth make

Its home, sweet vale, in thee !

To meditation precious is the prime

Of morning ; shaking off slumber,

With cares and griefs, that yester eve oppressed,

The soul awakes to vigorous exertion.

A blessed hour it is, when I can steal

From those who watch each movement, every look,

And with the tone obsequious, ask my will.

Alas ! I scarce dare think, lest they descry
The secret motions of a heart, that finds,
With none, the sympathy it seeks.
This balmy breath of heaven refreshes not
The fevered sense, when spirit is not free.
Yon bright beams, shining on ocean, earth, and
sky,
Light not the darkened soul ; scarce through the
eye
Give joy, when bondage holds with golden links
The form unwilling. Nor yet can truth
Enter a guest, when prejudice draws bolt
Upon the noble intellect. All here
Wear the chain, on body or on mind.
How wanders thought ! leading me back to pains
From which I fled : — hangs a dark drapery o'er
The cheerful morn, and drives devotion far.
Then let me hasten.
In yonder humble cottage I perchance

May find the good I seek. Grant it, Father
In Heaven ! May thy servant be messenger
Of peace unto this troubled breast. How strange
The chance, that brought him to this Isle ! Chance !
say I ?

Pardon, O God ! it was thy Providence.

(*Exit toward the cottage.*)

SCENE II.

Cottage near the beach. Mr. Lawton in front, with a book. He rises from his seat, under a tree, to meet Zelia, who is advancing.

MR. LAWTON.

Welcome, Lady, to this lonely dwelling.

ZELIA.

If on your private hour my presence brings
Intrusion, let me retire.

MR. LAWTON.

I pray you nay,

My Lady. Something of import would you ;
Else, one young and happy had not sought out
The dwelling of a poor recluse. Fear not
To speak your wishes : He whom I serve,
Better approves the deed of charity,
Than many prayers.

ZELIA.

My boldness pardon
In the cause which urged timidity.
Report, some days agone, in whispers ran
Among the menial train, that line our hall :
It said, that in a lonely spot dwelt one,
A man, holy and kind ; speaking with tongue
Of foreign accent, words and prayers, such as
Their ears had never learned. Often he sought,
Within their wretched huts, the sick and old,
With words of comfort ; kneeled on the hard earth
Beside the couch, that misery with its impress
Had enstamped, —

MR. LAWTON.

Pray hold thee, Lady !

ZELIA.

Nay, — more, —

'T was whispered with mysterious air, as strange,
That not a prayer this pious man addressed
Unto Mary, — Virgin, — mother of God !

MR. LAWTON.

Heaven forbid, that on my tongue blasphemy
Should rest. Lady, my faith is Protestant.

ZELIA.

Of this, I doubted not, when yester eve,
In the poor hut of old Justine, your prayer
I heard. Joy leaped within my heart at sound
Of supplication, in simplicity,
Offered with faith to Him, who stoops from Heaven
To hear without a saintly medium,
The sinning creature, for mercy's sake alone.
I, too, am Protestant.

MR. LAWTON.

Now, God be praised!

ZELIA.

Amen, my reverend friend.

MR. LAWTON.

Yet, 'mid this joy,

My heart misgives me, and I tremble too :

For virtue is in peril, fair young maid,

Where pleasure tempts, and Truth Divine is
scorned.

ZELIA.

This do I know, therefore it is I seek

Your presence in my need. Against myself,

Timid and weak, protection I have sought.

Aid unto such, God sends his ministers,

A visible support to those, whose faith

Is still too weak to grasp the invisible.

MR. LAWTON (*with emotion*).

Lady excuse the feeling I cannot hide.

Thought backward turns, and brings to my review
Images of the past. To me, thou seemst
The child, lovely and loved, — my only one, —
Torn from these widowed arms, by early death.
The lost seems found in thee.

ZELIA.

On me, then, bestow
The sweet name of daughter.

MR. LAWTON.

O righteous Heaven !
I recognise the Hand that struck my joys.
As by the lightning scathed; each leaf and branch
Lay prostrate; and the wind passed mightily
Over the naked, unresisting trunk.
But now, transplanted to another soil,
And watered by the genial dews of Grace,
Fair fruits of Paradise bloom on these boughs.
To do thy will, O God, here — here am I :
Direct the way.

ZELIA (*with anxiety*).

Alas, how can I thus
Have moved the hidden fountain, in that breast,
Of grief so bitter ! I pray forgiveness
For inadvertent fault ; no harm was meant.

MR. LAWTON.

Forgive thee ! rather bless ; most sweet is it,
Young maiden, to be sought and honored
With such confidence. But strange thy words,
Hard to divine ; how, in such early youth,
The faith thy fathers call heretical,
Be that, to which thy heart has given its trust.

ZELIA.

Strange tale it is, which yet has not been told
To any here ; but I would speak it now,
Else my poor heart would burst.

MR. LAWTON.

Speak then, daughter,
And believe that you may trust the servant
Of Him you also serve.

ZELIA.

Almost in infancy, e'er yet the mind
Could prize a father's care or mother's love,
To famed Columbia's shore my parents sent
Me, their sole child. In careful hands was placed
Their dearest treasure ; and so willed Heaven,
That under the same friendly roof I found
The heir of Clermont's noble house, Augustus,
The dear companion of my childhood's sports,
Son of my father's friend. In foreign land,
Where every tongue, but his alone, was strange,
Where we together grew, read the same books,
And where in softer hours we talked of home,
The same dear home : what wonder then —

MR. LAWTON.

Lady,
Why hesitate ? your inmost soul I guess.
A friendship, lasting as the love of life,
And dearer, was thus commenced : believe me,
This confidence is safe within my breast.

ZELIA.

This heart, oppressed with grief and fear, can feel
The value of such kindness. To proceed ;
The beloved guardians of our early years,
Were worthy of the trust. Gifted for earth,
Adorned with every grace to fit for heaven,
Were Whaley and his gentle wife.
Childless, on us their hoard of love bestowed.
But not alone our present good they sought ;
The Gospel's holy precepts, faithfully
Instilled into our minds, sacred we held.
When Reason scanned the creed of Romish faith,
And beams of Heaven's own Light burst o'er the
page
Of Truth Divine, our doubts removed : casting
Aside doctrines our fathers held, we two
Opposed, in heart and principle,
What we accounted error in our kindred.
Affection then became a sacred bond :

Each shared the other's hopes and fears ; our joys
And griefs were one : blest were we, even
In days of deep anxiety and gloom.

Bitter the grief

When mandate came for my return alone :
Leave him, who next to Heaven was dear ! I
came ;
My native land then saw, and felt with joy
Drops of paternal love bedew my cheek.
My mother's tomb was all of her I found.
'T is pain to speak the rest.

MR. LAWTON.

Fear nothing, Lady,
Let me know all.

ZELIA.

Unused to the vain show,
That makes the sum of worldly happiness,
I find myself a stranger, though at home.
The idol of a father's fondest love,

The mistress absolute of bowing slaves,
I am myself a captive, not unlike
The deity enchain'd in ancient Tyre
Fast to the feet of Hercules, lest he
Escape his worshippers. Jewels most rare
Cover a breast that sorrow makes its home.
In sinful paths my feet are often led.
I plead in vain, a father's gathering frown
Presses with fear and grief this sinking heart :
Yielding, to Heaven I scarce dare lift a prayer.
Offend my God ! O, what a mortal grief!
Like some frail bark, tossed on the raging wave,
Compass and rudder lost, — thus with my soul.
Friend I have none ; for he who would have stayed
My sliding steps is far, O, far away.

MR. LAWTON.

Not so : there 's One with wakeful eye looks on ;
Who does, for good, events most adverse turn.
Within their bounds He locks the mighty waves :
Holds with his hand the driving hurricane,

And draws the bolts of Death. This wondrous
might
Is coupled with a Love as wondrous.
The meanest creature formed by His hand,
Is object of His care. The little bird,
The tiny insect, sporting on the breath
Of lightest zephyr, even the reptile,
Object of our disgust, He guards and feeds.
The sunbeams glad the eyes, and the breeze cools
The fevered senses, of the veriest wretch
That walks the earth. The field yields him bread,
And fountain water. Shall He, whose mercies
Reach even the vile, forget his children ;
Leave them in their need ? Rather the mother
Shall forget her babe : she may, in frailty
Of our nature ; but His love is changeless
As the Throne eternal !

ZELIA.

These words, good Sir,
Lighten in part the load of heavy thought.

Still I doubt : can Love Omnipotent,
Perfect, consist with trials, various
And great as mine ?

MR. LAWTON.

Virtue in circumstance
Is often placed to try it and refine.
Thus precious things of earth are purified :
Cast in the furnace, the Refiner sees
His image in the brightening gold ; but know,
That not a moment longer than it needs
For the complete impression, will He leave
It there.

ZELIA.

My fearful heart trembles, while
It rejoices. Should I fail ! —

MR. LAWTON.

O, fear not :
Tempted to stray, thy refuge is in God ;
For aid thou 'rt bid to pray, neglecting not

A watch to keep over the wayward thought.
Treading with fearless step the narrow path,
Thorny though it be, and at the entrance
Dark, — sweet flowers grow there, and light, at
first

A twilight beam, — The Sun of Righteousness
Rising, will cast his splendors o'er the way,
Lightening thy pathway to the perfect day.

ZELIA.

Helpless and timid, too long have I strayed.
Unto your cot, my steps were led by Him,
Who keeps his eye upon the little flock,
That follow where He leads. Help thus He gives
My inexperience ; — and your reward, —
His love, and smile approving.

(*Exit ZELIA.*)

MR. LAWTON.

Blest reward !

For this, my country, wealth, and friends were left,

And trusting to the treacherous deep my life,
I sought in foreign solitude a home,
Here, where the glowing sun pours on our race
Disease and death. His smile, who gave com-
mand,

“ Go preach to all the Gospel of my Grace,” —
His smile, — a world for it, how small the price !

(*Exit into the cottage.*)

SCENE III.

Saloon in the house of the Count De Nouville :
Count De Nouville and Baroness of Belfont.

BARONESS.

Good friend, forbear ! inflame not thus your blood.
Anger, in this our burning clime, dries up
The vital current ; 'T is most unwholesome
And laborious exercise of spirit.
Pleasure has rights, a gallant court she holds
In these soft bowers. Perpetual summer sheds

Perpetual sweets. The cooling mid-day breeze
Invites us to repose, the evening hour
To banquet, song, and dance.

COUNT.

Lady, of joy
Speak not to me, whose life wears out in care.
Time was, when banquet, dance, and song
Were welcome, as golden hours winged with bliss.
But now vexation lengthens out the day,
And chases slumber from the night. My wealth
I hold in hazard : — slaves in mutiny : —
My child in disobedience.

BARONESS.

Zelia !
Impossible ! so loving, gentle, good !

COUNT.

Would she were perverse ! I should know my
course.

But with her gentle nature, how can mine

Be harsh and uncomplying ? Yes, my friend,
'T is subject of regret, that I e'er sent
Such early youth from the parental home.
A father truly can desire no more
Of outward charm than I in Zelia find.
My whitening locks admonish the discharge
Of passions, ruling in my manhood's noon ;
Bidding me look for happiness to her
Whose infancy gave but a passing joy.
But grief seems seated in my daughter's breast,
I look in vain for sportive gayety :
Nor song, nor dance, doth charm her. Firm, yet
mild,
The mirth of youth repels she : it would seem
Sorrow hath borrowed for her pleasure's robe.
The day of rest, our gayest festival,
Sacred with her to God and solitude, —
With prayer she wearies out the lonely hours :
And if command, perchance, unwilling brings

Her presence to the festal board, the jest,
The laugh, no welcome from her meet ; reproof
Is seated in her speaking eye, whence steals,
Beneath the downcast lid, the precious dew.
For this did I consign her to the care
Of strangers, whose mistaken fancies, warping
Her tender mind, gave to my loving arms
A melancholy girl, — a devotee ?

BARONESS.

Calm, calm thee, Count ! 't is childhood's prejudice,
Which better knowledge soon will wear away.
Leave her to me, her school shall be the world,
And I the teacher, in the dear delights
Of life.

COUNT.

Your friendship, Lady, of my youth the joy,
Comes now to be the solace of my age.
Gladly I 'd hail the hour, that shall unite
My house to that of Clermont, consummate

The marriage of your nephew with my child.
Augustus, methinks, should hasten his return,
Lately apprized of this our old design,
So closely kept from Zelia. Now Heaven grant
The foolish girl, by sullenness, draw not
From him disgust. Wealth, broad and solid, thus
Shall flow around them.

(*Enter a servant, in haste.*)

SERVANT.

My lord, your presence
In the outer hall, they wait. Six oxen,
Of the finest breed, are dead, and the slaves,
So choice, from Guinea's coast, just purchased,
Are seized with dying agonies.

COUNT.

Villains !
And bloodhounds ! thus to gorge themselves with
life.
Lady, I will have vengeance.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.

A negro cabin, shaded by plantain trees.

ZAMBA (*in front, walking in agitation*).

The hour draws nigh, the hour of vengeance
comes !

Vengeance, too long delayed, so much desired.

Ha ! hated foe ! this hand shall childless write
Thy haughty house. From me, thou didst tear
The last, most loved, the only one that fate
Had left to me. Yes, I will rend from thee
The solace of thy age ! — thy daughter !
I laugh thee now to scorn ! — thy Zelia dies !

(*Pauses. — Continues, in a softened tone.*)

Zelia, the gentle one ! — Zelia ! Can I,
Whose soul was soft as woman's, do this deed ?
Dissolving nature gushes from my eyes,
At the free sports of happy infancy :—
The tottering step of age makes me a child !

In spirit then I rove along the streams
That roll their golden sands to Afric's coast.
Again, beneath the lofty palmetto,
Recline luxurious, upon the mat,
A mother's hand has wrought.
The joyous voices of my infant brothers,
Ring strangely in my ears ! and she ! — O, she !
Amaba ! Ha ! Amaba, — where art thou ?
Thou, in whose smile my soul did sun itself.
How blessed was I, when twilight's curtain veiled
The beams of sultry day, with footsteps swift,
Scarce leaving their impression on the sand,
I hastened to thy leafy bower, my love !
Joy dancing in my breast, as thy accents
Gave welcome greeting : then the lively dance,
And song, and mirth, and converse unrestrained,
Gave wings to time. O, happy, happy hours !

(Strong emotion.)

And when returned from warfare with my foes,

Not princely honors could on me bestow
Such triumph as when thee with spoils I decked.
Thy beauty shone, encircled by the bands
Of ivory and gold, my hand had torn
From necks of captive kings.

(*Pauses.*)

Prince ! Conqueror !
Lover ! has this been ?

(*The sound of a horn is heard, he starts.*)

Fool, fool ! I waken
From the dream, which makes me weak and craven.
That sound proclaims that I am prince no longer,
But a mean slave ! called by its blast to toil
For my worst foe ! O ! is there not a bolt,
Launched by the thunder, that can reach his
heart ?

Harder than rocks, that sport them with the waves,
Grinding the wrecks, freighted with living men,
Whose shrieks they heed not ! harder is his heart,

Who sported with my anguish, with the tears,
Of her, he tore from me !— my wife ! Amaba !

(*He strikes his brow with clenched hands.*)

(*In a low, bitter tone.*)

With him, I too will sport, heed not his love,
But mock his anguish and his bitter tears,
When, pale and cold, he views the lifeless form
Of his own child, his last, beloved one ;
And when he faltering asks, who did the deed ?
I 'll shout reply, — Amaba's spirit sent
The bowl of death to Zelia ! — this, to you ! —
Driving my dagger's point deep in his heart,
Then turn it on myself ! —

ALPHONSE, (*who enters unseen, during the latter part
of the soliloquy.*)

Nay, nay, my friend,
For thou must live and reign with me : Our revolt
Shall be the signal for a general one.
The slaves, timid and indolent though they be,

Are restless in their chains ; they want a chief
Of metal firm, and courage daring,
To stir them up to action : then will they
Bold deeds and cruel do ; like tigers roused,
They are savage in their wrath : fit tools for us
To work our dire revenge, and triumph too.
'T is not for vengeance only that I burn,
For power hath charms sweeter than vengeance, far.
The glorious day now bursts upon my sight,
Which to the kingly Haytian rival gives.
That day shall see a diadem circling
This royal brow. Then, Zamba, thou, my friend,
Shalt next the throne hold princely rank.

(*Pauses.*)

(*Surprised.*)

How now !

Doth joy not swell the soul of Zamba ? why
So sad ? all is not lost !

ZAMBA.

Lost to Zamba !

Birth made me prince, fortune has made me slave.
All hope is lost, all passion dead, save one ;
Revenge, revenge !

ALPHONSE.

Revenge is well, if well
It be employed. Great wrongs, I doubt not,
Lay upon you, though to me unknown.
But I would listen, while into my breast
Your griefs you count.

(*Aside.*) His whim I will humor,
Madness it were to lose him.

(*Aloud.*) My Zamba,
Speak ! doubt not the sympathy that longs
To make your woes its own.

ZAMBA.

Brief my sad tale.
On Benin's coast, there, where the mighty Niger
Divides its waters through a hundred channels,
With cooling and with fertile influence ;

There was I chief. A band of daring warriors
Obeyed my voice, and followed me to fight
Against a hostile herd of fierce Ashantes,
Descending on our hamlets ; these repelling,
In the hot chase, too far we wandered ;
We were surrounded and made prisoners.
Then, when night closed upon that fatal day,
We saw, while raging in our bonds, from far,
The flame consume our dwellings : and the shrieks
That frantic rose to heaven, stunned the racked
sense.

It was the death-cry of our aged parents,
And little children. The morrow's dawn
Brought throngs of captured people. Mothers, in
prime
Of womanhood, stood with their sons and daugh-
ters,
Active youths, and comely maidens : these,
A weeping train, followed the victor's steps.

In this sad group there stood my heart's own idol,
My dear Amaba ! who but one short moon
Had blessed me with her love. As frightened bird
Darts to its nest, so rushed she to my arms.
Encircled thus she stood, and heedless seemed
Of the hard fate that waited her and me.
She cared not, while side by side we walked,
Whither her footsteps tended. Alas,
'T was to the cruel sea they bore us,
Grave of the helpless ! pathway to despair !

ALPHONSE.

Great are your wrongs, my friend ; to be enslaved,
Were an injustice that cries up to Heaven,
Calling down vengeance on the aggressor.

ZAMBA.

Nay,
Slavery in our land is but common lot,
The fate of warfare, a game, in which the strong
Or skilful win the prize.

ALPHONSE.

The love of gain
Sends these white traffickers to Afric's coast,
Carrying bawbles to the barbarous chiefs,
To change for human flesh. These to chastise,
And to avenge my race, now nerves this hand,
Arming in virtue's cause.

ZAMBA.

Nay, Alphonse,
Such are subtleties of argument
Above my understanding. Call you it
Virtue, to fill with discontent, envy,
And hate, those simple ones, whose sad estate
Is servitude ? *Your* love of gain, of power,
Will it not make them doubly slaves ? — then where
Your virtue ?

ALPHONSE.

(*Aside.*) Now may the spirit of evil
Afflict me, if this I leave unpunished.

(*Aloud.*) Zamba, thou art witty, but the better ;
I love thy spirit, sense, and greatly count
Upon thy wisdom to direct the plan,
Tending to general good. But time hastens,
And the story of thy wrongs unfinished :
My heart demands it of thee.

ZAMBA.

Truly saidst thou,
Alphonse, on love of gain are founded ills
Innumerable. But it boots me not
On what the ill is founded, so I suffer.
Slavery is not the ill I would avenge,
Though galling is its chain. O worse ! far worse !
But thou shalt hear the tale of villany,
That drinks up all my blood !

ALPHONSE.

Go on. I listen.

ZAMBA.

Sold to the white, Amaba shared my fate.

As faded from the sight our native land,
The bond uniting us, still stronger grew.
Rank, honor, home, and freedom, she to me ;
I, all on earth to her. Such tenderness
And truth, they pitied, — barbarians pitied,
And would not separate. Together sold,
The Count De Nouville was our purchaser,
Our master, tyrant ! May all the curses
Pronounced by Fetish men, on Afric's shores,
Light on his head !

ALPHONSE.

Calm thee, Zamba ; vengeance,
Our wacthword, waits

ZAMBA.

It does ! I swear to aid thee !
Without it life is hateful. She whose smile
Made day of night was blotted from the heaven
Of my love. Torn from my arms, Amaba
Died ! slain by her bitter grief, and I live !

Dragging through years of woe the maddening hope
To wreak upon the head of Count De Nouville,
Tyrant licentious, the woes he heaped on mine.

Amaba ! this time has come ! Zamba now
Hastes to meet rejoicing, on the briny wave,
Thy spirit, sated with the sacrifice
His hand has made. Then again on wings
Of love to Benin's burning shore, there bathe
In lucid streams, and rest in fragrant bowers
Our unchained souls, to separate no more.
I come ! Amaba !

ALPHONSE.

Of death, talk not :
Live to take ample vengeance. The white man,
Disdaining now our tawny race, shall learn,
In fear, respect for Afric's sable sons.
These foul oppressors crushed beneath our stroke,
Shall to the victors leave their wives and daughters.

(*The conch sounds again.*)

ZAMBA.

I must away. Hark ! 't is the call to labor.

(*Exit.*)

ALPHONSE.

A madman this !

But I must not lose him ; talents he has,
And courage, for my purpose. The Island
Gained, I 'll not constrain his humor ; would die ?
I 'll let him, he might be dangerous rival.
Of human kind he hates but one, while I
Hate all : born of mingled blood, to no one
Race belong ; over them all I 'd triumph.
My father white, even in his grave I curse him !
A menial he left his only son.
My mother, O, I blush to own her name ;
A low, enslaved, untutored African !
What then am I ? a monster ; ay, and I
Will do such acts of unheard villany,
That Nature shall cast me off, a blot

On her fair face, or Fame exalt me
To a hero. (*Pauses.*)

My sister fair, Baronne of Belfont, styled !
Humbly to her I long enough have bowed,
Crushed by her haughty look and stern command.
She, at my feet shall sue, yes, vainly sue.
My father's wealth 't is time I now enjoy,
And homage of his slaves. Power ! O, most sweet
To him who wore its yoke — constrained to pay
Obeisance. Upon his tongue falsehood dwells,
In his heart, deadly hate ! By guile or force,
Breaking the yoke, as on a loathsome worm,
Tramples he on his tyrant, and the fools
Who aided him, chastises he with scorpions !
Talk they of virtue ? what is it ? — the bawble
That priests do play withal : and promises ? —
Perfumed air. Fools inhale my honeyed breath,
'T will swell them out, but never fatten.
They count on vast estates when I am king :

Grants shall they have ; fair, large territories ! —

(*Pauses and smiles.*)

In the moon ! — No matter, let them help me.

Once a Baron, next step will make me king !

And then, rewards shall come ; we 'll see, why
then, —

They may serve me : 't will be sufficient honor.

They serve me now, as I were king already.

At my command they go, do my bidding

Without questioning. Say I to one,

Destroy the cattle of the Count, your master,

'T is done ; poison his valued Africans,

They do it. (*He pauses and walks about in agitation.*)

True, compunctionous visitings

At times annoy me, and in dreams I hear

The cries of the poor wretches punished

For deeds urged on by me. But what do I

With conscience ? Conscience ! a bugbear !

there is

No such thing as conscience. The remembrance
Of the nurse's prattle torments the man.

E'en priests laugh at it, for when we confess
A lie or theft, they bid us tell our prayers,
Twice o'er, then laugh at us for fools. Thus have
I heard them at their cups. *(A bell rings.)*

Ha!

My service, Lady, freely shalt thou have,
Thou wilt not need it long. *(Exit.)*

A C T I I.

SCENE I. *Saloon in the house of the Count De Nouville.* Count De Nouville. Zelia.

COUNT.

Daughter, too long has lenity been used,
The ruin grows more wide. Our flocks and herds
Already are the prey of miscreants,
Who now destroy each other. Can I look
Tamely on destruction as it hovers
Over our wealth ; ourselves ? Child, who can say
Whether this mischief stop short of our lives ?
Perchance these wretches may presume upon,
What cowardice they count in us, and lay
Their treacherous hands upon our very persons.
They shall be made to feel with whom they dare
To trifle.

ZELIA.

Father, permit your Zelia
To plead ; since, in your bosom, she will find
An advocate : for nature pleads the cause
Of Reason and Humanity.

COUNT.

Zelia,
Your ignorance and innocence would cause
A smile, were not the matter of moment
So serious. Well, say on ; my nature
Is indulgent.

ZELIA.

Of punishment, you speak,
My father ; should we not discriminate ?
Search out the guilty, not confound with them
The innocent and helpless ?

COUNT.

The scourge shall
Search them out ; make them confess, —

ZELIA.

And think you
Severity can open hearts ? force truth
Upon the lips ? rather will it close up
The heart to good, open the lips to lies,
And accusation false of one another.

COUNT.

That cannot be ; in vice, they are all alike.
To punish all, far short the mark we fall not,
Some guilt we always hit. Daughter, you see
. Not all the blackness of this race, their hearts
Are darker than their faces !

ZELIA.

Ah father,
It is in our human nature darkness lies ;
And circumstance in them makes it seem darker.
Search round the globe, is there upon its face
Being more wretched than the slave, deprived
Of country, kindred, liberty and hope ;

Unused to toil, — until, in stranger land,
His eye reluctant sees the dawn, calling
To fruitless labor ?

COUNT.

Now, out, I say,
Upon such reasoning ! Was man not doomed,
By the brow's sweat, his daily bread to gain ?

ZELIA.

True, father, the command rests on us all,
Yet all do not thus toil : we who are masters
Enjoy in seeming idleness our bread ;
Perchance, they who without reward, labor
For us, may feel aggrieved.

COUNT.

Sophistry, child,
I perceive thou'st learnt in yon Republic.
Know'st not that different grades have been as-
signed
To men ? — and if, by circumstance, to us
Wealth has been given, ease follows in its train.

ZELIA.

This may be so, but liberty hath charms
To sweeten labor, poverty and pain ;
And hence the bitterness, with which the slave,
Who is not all a slave, being in spirit
Freed by Truth Divine, regards his master.

COUNT.

Thou art a foolish child : all men are slaves,
In some guise or other ; some to their own
Ignoble natures ; others to outward forms
Of fashion, pomp, religion, civil law.
A king, — what but a master ? and we,
The slaves to furnish out his lodging, food,
Attire, and equipage, with regal state.
And law, — what is it but a decent fetter
Put on society ? all men are slaves
That wear it. And priestcraft, — what ?

ZELIA.

Nay, father,

Dearest father ! do not yourself a harm.
These thoughts, are not the thoughts of sober truth,
Of Truth Divine.

COUNT.

Girl, interrupt me not.

I say, the knaves who preach should practise.
Fit lecturers on morality indeed
Are men who grind the faces of the poor,
Who fatten on the tears of starving
Infancy ! I 'd loathe the bread that 's purchased
By labor of the little wretch that leaves,
Before the dawn, the couch, where arms maternal
Gives to the shivering form its warmest shelter.
Now fie upon such manhood ! these are brutes
Compared with him that serves him of the toil
Of Afric's stalwart sons ! who even makes
The stubborn knave smart for his indolence.
Good cabins, clothes, and food, and time for sports,
Have these ungrateful villains.

Who waits ? I lose temper, daughter ; you rouse
My wrath by such arguments : answer not ;
Too much I 've heard already.

(*Servant enters.*)

Did my lord call?

COUNT.

Yes,

Bid my Intendant come. To measures sharp,
Must we resort, since leisure too copious
Gives miscreants scope to plot and execute
Mischief most foul.

(To the Intendant who enters.)

See that more work be laid
Upon those murderous knaves : at evening hour,
The time they gave to sports and dances gay,
Henceforth let them do the labor of the brutes,
By their own wickedness destroyed.

(Intendant bows and exit. Exit Count another way.)

ZELIA.

Alas ! alas ! that we erring creatures,
With eagle eye, should scan each other's faults,
Regardless of our own. One wraps his form
In furs, and proudly glances on the wretch,
Who, shivering and hungry, crouches beside
The stately portal of his splendid home,
Which entering, he investigates the cause
Of misery at the antipodes ;
And eloquently pleads for those, whose wants
Will never touch his purse, in their redress.
How few there are that ask, — “ Who is my neighbour ? ”
And fewer still, like the Samaritan,
Pour oil into his wounds. O my father !
No heart of stone is thine. Prosperity
In golden armor cased thee ; every shaft,
By pity winged, glances beside the mark :
But grace can find an entrance to thy heart.

For thee I 'll pray, and weary Heaven with tears.

{ (*Throws herself upon a couch.*)

(*Enter Baroness of Belfont.*)

BARONESS.

Zelia, you weep ! why ceaseless flow these tears ?
In youth's fair spring, pleasure puts forth its buds ;
Cull them, sweet maid, e'er faded is their bloom ;
Their fragrance wasted on the passing breeze.

ZELIA.

Lady, think you that pleasure is the end
And object sole of this our mortal life ?

BARONESS.

What other end ? — Woman is formed for it.
To youth, is lent the charm of novelty :
Its magic wand, to every changing scene
Enchantment gives ; this fairy season love
Is in his prime. Beauty his arrows wings
With lilies, roses, violets, emblems
Of woman, youthful, lovely, graceful, sweet ;

Empress and victor in the world of love.

When time, most unsuspected, steals away

The rosy hours of life, then comes pleasure's noon.

Fortune gives bliss more solid, more intense.

Ease spreads its downy couch, and luxury,

Substantial, varying, endless joys unfolds.

ZELIA.

Your picture, lady, is not yet complete :

Comes there no evening to this sunny day

No winter to this fruitful year ?

BARONESS.

Pleasure,

The goddess of each soft delight, excludes

From her domain both night and age :

Nature in courtly ministry, the skies,

With a dark drapery veils, shutting out day,

Ofttimes offensive to the softened sense :

Art then with lustre hangs the fairy court

Of fashion, its radiance more enchanting

Than the brightest beam of sunlight. And thus
When age to beauty gives the withering touch,
Art quick undoes the mischief, repairing
With skill divine the form and lineaments ;
Bids roses bloom upon the faded cheek
With deeper glow, and on the sallow'd brow
Lilies more fair expand. This magic court,
Zelia, invites your presence. Youth, beauty,
Fortune, love, to you the sceptre give.
More, would you have, fair maid ?

ZELIA.

Yes, Lady, yes !

A good there is, more highly prized by me.
Far sweeter than the fragrant morn of youth,
Brighter than rose blooming upon the cheek
Of Beauty, dearer than first sigh of Love,
Than Fortune's golden gifts more precious
Is Heaven's approving smile. Disease or age
Must pale the brightest cheek : falsehood or death

Wither the rose of love : than fair one's whim
Fortune more fickle still, takes back the gifts
She once conferred. Think you the world will smile
On us ? Ah, lady, no ! This paradise
Blackened with tempest, will to desert turn,
All wild and desolate : the heart in vain
Seek its lost joys, and clasp the fiend, despair.
But Heaven can smooth the thorny couch of care,
Can still the throb which rends the aching breast,
Will smile, should fortune, friendship, love, all
frown,
And give to death, man's most terrific foe,
An angel's form, beaming with peace and hope.
This is the good I crave.

BARONESS.

Such thoughts of gloom
I give to sadder hours ; succeeding years,
Zelia, will leave us time to turn devout.

ZELIA.

In fairy land we dwell ; the clarion sound

Of Death in some unthought of hour, this scene
Of mimic bliss will change — reality
Will break upon us.

BARONESS (*going*).

I must now away,
For numerous guests to-morrow crown my board,
My people wait for orders. May I hope
That you, young friend, will grace the festive
scene ?

ZELIA.

To-morrow is the christian's holy day,
The sacred hours I dare not give to mirth, —
They all to Heaven belong.

COUNT (*who had entered unseen*).

What mean you, girl,
So to provoke a father, too indulgent ?
Assuming thus the right to act or not,
As whim or idle notions prompt ? Would you
To a cloister, — there to whine and pray ; or

Rather among heretics, to chapel ?
Mix with the noisy herd, who arrogate,
Each for himself, the right to judge, tearing
The mitre from his Holiness ? Hear, me,
And obey. I command thee, child, to leave
Religious matters to the priesthood ; such
Is their business ; yours, to please your father.
Woman should have no thought, no will, but how
To charm. It ill befits her tender frame
And feeble mind, to enter in the lists
With man, and wrangle for opinions. O,
Much do I lament my own misjudgment.
Better hadst thou been ignorant, even
Of the elements of letters, than thus
Acquire, 'mong low republicans, the art
To set a father at defiance.

(With softened expression,)

Well,

Let it pass ; seek now to merit the love

Of him, thy future husband. Clermont's lord
Returns, and thee I destine for his bride.
What means this deadly paleness ? Zelia ! speak !

(*She faints.*)

Help, help ! my daughter dies !

(*Maid-servants enter and go to Zelia.*)

Wretch, that I am !

With harshness thus to wound thy gentle soul,
My lovely child ! open once more those eyes,
Dear as the light to mine. O, speak again ;
No music but thy voice delights my ear.

(*Zelia lying upon a sofa ; the Count hanging over her ; attendants busy about her. Baroness fanning herself.*)

BARONESS (*to her maids*).

Haste, maidens ! bear me out ; this scene o'er-
comes

My heart, of tender feeling all made up.

See how I tremble ! So ! — support me there !

Olinde ! ha ! raise me up ! — gently ! I 'm faint !
 Scenes of distress, my heart could ne'er endure.
 Take, take me from this sight ! poor, poor Zelia !
 Dear Count, my friend ! adieu !

(*Aside.*) How pale she is !

She talked of death just now : and frightful 't is
 To think of it : let me be gone.

(*Exit Baroness, leaning languishingly on her maids.*)

COUNT.

O joy !

She wakes to life ! my child !

ZELIA.

Father, — what ? tears !

COUNT (*motions to attendants, who go out.*)

Tears of love and joy.

ZELIA.

Ah yes, love and joy :

I dreamed but now of love and joy, sweet dream !

COUNT.

Dream ! what dream ? Ah, she is ill again !

ZELIA (*aside*).

Augustus comes, such was the dream I had.

COUNT.

What say'st thou, sweet? speak to me my beloved!

ZELIA (*timidly*).

Didst thou, dear father, speak of young Clermont;
Or was it but a dream?

COUNT.

No dream was it,
I spoke of him, and every hour we wait
His presence. Wilt thou not give him welcome?
His father was my friend. The Count Clermont
In dying, to my care Augustus left:
His lands, his slaves, his vast inheritance.
“ Watch over them, my dearest friend,” said he,
“ And make my son your own. In fitting time
Give Zelia to his arms.” Ye, both, were sent
Instruction to receive in distant lands.
Columbia’s shore I chose, for bloody hands

Our country's sceptre held. Concealed from thee
Was my design ; lest, in some female whim,
Thy heart might feel repugnance to the youth
Whom thou in merry days of childhood loved'st.
My daughter, wilt thou now repel him ?

ZELIA.

Who ?
Him ! repel Augustus ?

COUNT.

Enough, my child.
That smile, that tear, that eye and cheek tell tales.
Come to my arms, for love must have its vent,
Else would its pressure break my o'ercharged heart.
Thy smile will now bring sunshine to my soul,
And thy reward shall be the treasured wealth
Kept for thee. I will to the Baroness.
'T is fitting she my joy partake. Daughter,
The Lady of Belfont holds vast estate,
Augustus is her heir ; offend her not.

So will I have it, for to-morrow's feast
Thy best attire and loveliest smile prepare. (*Exit.*)

ZELIA.

He comes ! and comes for me ! this joy, so great
Oppresses me. My chamber let me seek,
His name to praise, who every good bestows,
His grace to ask, who all his children guides.

(*Exit.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Seashore; a slope covered with orange and mango trees. Ship in the offing at anchor. Sunset.*

AUGUSTUS (*advancing*).

Hail, native Isle ! upon thy fruitful soil
All-bounteous Nature lavishes her charms.
How beautiful art thou ! though but a speck
In this fair creation of the Great Being,
Whose hand made all, and made all fair and good.
Thou, Earth ! art glorious in thy loveliness :
Yon arch of azure, thine imperial dome,
Sparkling with moving gems. In royal state,
We walk beneath, and press with joyous steps
Thy turf of richer dye, more varied hues,
Than gorgeous tapestry, pressed by the foot
Of Eastern beauty on her bridal day.

At early dawn, when the cool breezes play
O'er silvery waves, among the forest oaks,
A ruby curtain veiling half the sky,
Rolls back apace, until the glorious sun
A flood of light sheds over mountain top,
Turret and spire. And now at closing day,
When lowing flocks return to seek the fold,
And birds chirp out an evening song of praise ;
The orb descending shows a broader disk,
Quenching his light in floods of molten gold ;
While the full moon, now veiled in snowy fleece,
Now riding in unclouded lustre, calms
And refreshes, by her silver ray, both
Wearied sense and soul.
Most beautiful, ye hills, and vales, and woods !
Sweet flowers, and gentle birds, and insects bright !
Perfuming the fields, singing in groves, sporting
In sunbeams, how I love ye all !
Thou Ocean too ! so fearfully sublime

In storm, hast beauty in thy rest. All things
In this material world are fair to him,
Who, with the heart's deep gratitude, receives
Them as the bounteous gifts of Love supreme.
He looks abroad, the master and the guest
Of an abode, formed for his transient stay.
In vain ye fling your odors, scented bowers !
In vain your song, musicians of the grove !
Waters ! ye flow for nought; and lights of heaven !
Useless your fires, if man were not !
Still lives he not for you. That hand,
Which felled the forests of a thousand years,
Erected cities with an hundred gates,
And ploughed the waves that battle with the skies;
That hand shall rest as nerveless as yon clod.
The eye, that drank in beauty and explored
The page of wisdom, reached the starry world,
Shall close for ever its admiring gaze.
The form that holds dominion o'er thee, — Earth !

Take to thy sod, for dust it is ; but know,
The soul is not for thee.

Then boast thee not
Of all thy glorious beauty. The brightness
Of yonder orbs, that roll in light eternal,
Fades in the glory of the deathless soul !
The soul, released from this material,
Bursting its shell, now takes celestial flight.
Thy beauties, Earth ! like tints of summer morn,
Vanish before the kindling blaze of Heaven !

(Exit slowly among the trees.)

Enter Zelia with Nora, an attendant.

ZELIA (*sings*).

Lo ! the hour of setting day.
Come, let us to the ocean's side,
To watch the parting, lingering ray
Fade softly o'er the swelling tide.
There we 'll pour our evening hymn,
While forest, field, and flood grow dim.

Now, the sun has sunk to rest
Upon his fleecy bed of gold,
Each little warbler seeks its nest,
And flocks now hasten to the fold.

Come ! this is the hour to pray,
Our Father seek, at closing day.

See the dusky mantle fall
O'er the bright flowers and golden wave ;
Sad semblance of the mournful pall
That covers beauty in the grave.

Let us make our prayer to Him,
Whose brighter glories ne'er grow dim.

One, by one, the stars appear
Upon the heaven's deep sapphire arch ;
And like a host are marshalled there,
To follow Time's unwearied march.

Here we 'll sing our evening hymn
To the bright star of Bethlehem.

Nora, good Nora !

Thou who didst nurse me in my infant years,
Well do I remember thy kind care, scarce
Exceeded by a mother's. With her own,
Thy image, as I saw thee then, ever
Is blended. Over thee, my kind old nurse,
I much rejoice, that Heaven should thus extend
Its mercy. Hope scarcely whispered it, though
On wings of love to Mercy's Throne, I bore
Thee in my daily prayer ; and now, angels look
With joy upon the grace poured in thy heart
When age has blanched thy head.

NORA.

Yes, Lady, yes.

Nora is poor and sinful ; long has sinned.
My heart is touched to think how the great God
Is good to negro woman. Your prayer
He heard for Nora. I will bless him ever !

ZELIA.

And thou dost well, good nurse ; 't is God alone
Who giveth good. Find we it in others
Or ourselves, it is from Him.

NORA.

Him I seek,
Where else can Nora go ? (Sings.)

Saviour, thou didst die for me,
Buy with thy life my liberty ;
Such thy love to me a slave,
Gav'st thyself my soul to save.

Thee I 'll seek, for thou canst free,
And wilt, from sin's hard slavery.

(*Exeunt towards the sea.*)

SCENE II.

Twilight rapidly closing ; full moon rising ; Negroes coming from the seashore carrying heavy burdens.

AUGUSTUS (*advancing*).

Ha ! slaves employed when they should seek repose
From toil laborious, under the beams
Of burning Cancer ! Who is the man
With heart that can thus use his fellow men ?

(*To a slave.*)

Who is your master ?

SLAVE.

The Count De Nouville.

AUGUSTUS.

The Count De Nouville ! did I hear aright ?
Father of her I love ! Oh, how can I
Believe it true ?

(*To another slave.*)

To whom do you belong ?

SLAVE.

To Count Clermont.

AUGUSTUS.

It must be so !

These are my father's lands, my inheritance.
 These walks are all familiar, yonder grove,
 Grown tall and thick since last its shade I trod,
 By memory is marked with childhood's sports ;
 And there the hedge which I have often passed
 To meet my little playfellow, sweet Zelia !
 Days of my infancy ! dear recollections, —

(Other negroes advancing.)

What do I see ? yon aged form bending
 Beneath that load, too heavy for — ha ! he falls !

(A stroke is heard.)

Hold villain ! strike not. —

SLAVE DRIVER.

Sir, I have orders
 To see the work performed ; interference
 Would on me bring blame.

(Exeunt slaves, passing quickly.)

AUGUSTUS.

Now God so help me
As I protect these helpless ones ! They know
Not yet Clermont, their master, rather friend.
Yes, friend and father to the most abased
That labors for me. Else could I not pray
To Thee, my Father, who in heaven art.

(*Exit, ascending the hill.*)

Enter Alphonse.

ALPHONSE.

Clermont ! did he say Clermont ? he, the heir
Returned ? Then must I use despatch : the work
No longer brooks delay. The slaves must rise.
Should they know their lord, and, knowing, love,
My plot would fail. Yonder fools he pitied.
This will win them to betray me ; strike now
Or die, I must. Zamba ! ho ! Zamba !

(*Zamba in the distance.*)

He hears me not, I 'll after him. (*Exit in running.*)

SCENE III.

Zelia with Nora ascending from the shore.

ZELIA.

Alas, he comes not ! Yonder stately ship
Departs with the fresh breeze. O, my torn heart !
Desponding thought sits heavy on it.

Fly from myself would I, and rest on Him
Who bears the weary ; Father in heaven ! name
Hallowed and sweet, filling with peace the soul.
He knows my griefs, my fears and murmurs, yet
Pities and forgives. O ! should wayward thought
Again intrude, find entrance in my breast,
Do thou expel it, Father, and, instead,
Plant holy resignation ! Fleeting, weak,
Are my best purposes : scarce formed, back rush
A thousand idle fancies, crushing each
High resolve.

NORA.

Lady, hear old Nora, — night

Comes fast : the dew will harm you. Mistress, dear,
Let us to the mansion.

ZELIA.

Right, good Nora :
Hasten we then.

Zamba enters, crossing their path : his look is troubled.

ZELIA (*in a kind tone*).

Good evening, Zamba. (Exit with Nora.)

ZAMBA.

Rather curse Zamba, gentle, most gentle one !
'T would ease my thoughts and nerve my arm.

Coward

Blood rushes back on this heart at sight of thee.

Those eyes of innocence are daggers, and
The softest murmur of thy voice doth strike me
With panic fear, but inspires no pity.

Zamba ! in infancy, didst feed on milk

Of tigers ? Had woman nursed thee, pity
Were in thy breast for woman.

(*He gazes after her.*)

Ha ! whence ? who ?
Who is this stranger ? stranger ? no, Zelia
In close and fond embrace he clasps. Alphonse
Spoke of the Lord Clermont ; perchance 't is he.
He ! Clermont ! For him also prepare the cup
Of Death ? Wretch ! by yon wave I 've sworn it !

Die !

Must he ? noble, young, and happy ! Ha ! what !
They love, that gentle pair ; smiles on their cheeks,
And tears on hers, like dew on rosebuds ; their
eyes

Sparkle with joy, as stars in the clear heaven.

Such joy was once my own. Thou, Amaba !

Thou thus didst gaze upon thy Zamba then,
But thou art gone, Amaba ; thou art dead.

Dead ! ha ! Who slew thee ? He ! Vengeance
awaken !

Amaba calls thee from the chilly waves.

Mournful her spirit cries to Zamba's soul

And chases pity thence. Drink, drink the cup,

Sweet youth ; with her 't will not be bitter.

With her ? — Zelia ! and must she drink it too ?

(*He pauses.*)

Ill was I once,

Suffering from pain and want ; no friend to care

For Zamba. With temples throbbing, burning

With fever and tormenting thirst, life

Was too bitter : still I clung to it. Then

Came the angel mercy in her shape ; yes,

Zelia brought help and comfort, gave me life.

Have I then grown a monster ? — Ha !

Come they this way ? then, like a troubled ghost

Let me fly morning light.

(*Exit.*)

Enter Augustus and Zelia.

ZELIA.

I scarce yet give

Credit to my sight, but fear to waken
From a pleasant dream and find thee gone.
Thanks deep and fervent render we to Him
Who o'er thee watched and brought to —

AUGUSTUS.

Ah, dearest,
Words are but feeble emblems of the thought.
Forgive my silence, tears might best express,
Were they not too unmanly, what I feel.

ZELIA.

It was but now that bodings dark, of storms
And wrecks, brought terror to my mind.
Anxious from yonder height, I watched a sail
That, flapping in the breeze, of anchorage
Gave signs. Disappointed hope to grief gave
Place when it departed ; for you escaped
My gaze and took me unawares. True is it,
That help is nearest when hope is farthest.

AUGUSTUS.

My eye, my ear, now take large draughts of bliss,

Deprived so long. Your father's blest designs
Know you, dearest ?

ZELIA.

I do.

AUGUSTUS.

And sanction them ?

ZELIA.

Augustus, can you doubt ?

AUGUSTUS.

No, sweet one, but

Confirmation of this hope from thee was bliss
My heart sought to enjoy. Now take, vain world !
Thy boasted gifts away, I have enough,
Zelia and Heaven.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

Saloon in the house of the Baroness of Belfont.

Baroness reclining in a languid manner on a sofa.

A young mulatto girl, richly attired, decorated with massive chains and rings of gold, sitting upon the floor at the feet of the Baroness, fanning her.

A servant woman waiting at a distance.

BARONESS.

A stranger, say you,

And he unattended at this late hour ?

Olinde, when will you cease these idle tales ?

Not long since you stunned me with the 'count

Of some poor starving and disgusting wretch,

Who craved from me assistance. Another

Comes ; some poor adventurer on foot. Go

With such messages to my Intendant :

It is his business. And, — and, — stay Olinde !

Wants he, this stranger I mean, a supper

And a bed, why give it him ; he shall not say

The house of Belfont was discourteous.

Importune me no more.

(*Exit servant.*)

My humor is

Not to be disturbed. I am weary. The day,

Myself, and the whole world displease me.

Zelia, the Count, all wrapped within themselves,

Are selfish, gloomy : and then the homage

Expected daily from those whose business is

To flatter women and on them bestow

The attention claimed by beauty, such homage

To-day has failed. Time was,—why talk of time ?

Since time has brushed but lightly o'er these

charms,

Nor dimmed their lustre : so says my glass :

(*Looking at herself in a mirror,*) — then

Small cause for such chagrin. ; an accident

Of light esteem, had not Zelia, in my mind,

Waked doubts of the future. Sickness, age, and

death

Are ugly in perspective ; suffering
In body, charms decayed or lost ; and then,
The last, but greatest terror, death ! O why
Do I thus tremble ? doubtless many years
Are yet before me ; still, death and the tomb,
So lonely, horrible, will come at last.

I cannot be exempt from the sad tax
Of human nature. These eyes must close
To all life's joys. What then ! what then ? Ah
then

To Judgment. — Priests say to Purgatory,
And that masses well paid, will liberate,
After ages passed in pain. Small comfort.
Philosophers do say that death is sleep
Which lasts for ever ; this like I better ;
But the thought is dreary. Sleep for ever !
Why, on such conditions, is life given ?
O fate ! most cruel, inexorable,
That placed me here. Fate ! what ! who ! where
is fate ?

I am sore bewildered. Let me to bed,
And if I can, forget in sleep, the thoughts
That waking, would distract me. (Going.)

(Re-enter servant.)

SERVANT.

My lady,
The Count of Clermont is the stranger.

BARONESS.

How?

My nephew! Joy, joy! distracting thoughts
Away! I fly to meet him.

(Exeunt.)

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Cultivated grounds, slaves at work.**Time, Sabbath.**ALPHONSE (to the Slaves).*

Yes, thus it is ; all work, work, work ! no time
For rest. They tell us of a holy day
When men in other lands from labor cease :
Such custom not for us. Good friends, dear friends !
Much I pity you ; myself I pity too.
The rich man sleeps, we wake to toil ;
And when he rises from his couch of ease,
Some hours have passed, since from the flinty bed,
Our limbs, weary with short repose, have risen.
On our bare heads the sun falls vertical,
And shelter none we find from wind and storm.
They, our masters, are made of other blood :
Their forms are delicate ; the sun at noon,
Or falling dews, they cannot bear.

And one like us, with skin of bronze, must shade,
(For lightest reed is in their fingers heavy,) Yes, shade them from the ray that tarnishes Their fairness ! (*Murmurs among the slaves.*)

Murmur not, good friends ; Why should we ? this is trifling : we were made To serve the white man ; we must be patient And submissive. True, scorn is hard to bear, But scorn will hurt us not. Would it were food ! Then might we have withal our mouths to fill ! Of this no need to speak, food does not lack ; Coarse it is true, but suffices hunger. Why then complain ? What to you is it That the dainty stomach of the white man Craves daintier nourishment ? Has he not gold To satisfy his wants ? Be content, my friends ; Why should ye murmur ?

SLAVES.

We would our rights ; This gold is ours, fruit of our own labor.

ALPHONSE.

True, but ye are slaves ; therefore be silent.
 No right have ye to gold : gold has its right
 In you ; it was the price paid for you. Friends !
 Good friends ! be quiet ; — nay then, hear me out.
 Ye are strong and young, and happy, —

SLAVES.

Nay, nay,
 Not happy, — we want freedom, rest, and gold.

ALPHONSE.

Good friends, ye are impatient ; hear me out.
 I tell ye, to complain ye have no cause ;
 But cause ye *may* have ! Manhood can bear, age
 Cannot ; and ye are growing old ; labor
 Will then be hard, and perchance like Canda, —
 Yes, like old Canda ; know ye poor Canda ?

SLAVES.

The aged one ? We know her : what of her ?

ALPHONSE.

Within my hut I sat at yester eve,

A trembling voice I heard, "Give me some food,"
It said. I looked and Canda's withered form,
Half bent with age, stood suppliant at my door.
And well did I remember her, for late
I 'd seen a cruel driver lay the scourge
On this poor aged wretch. Her speech pursued :
" The troubles of my life are nearly done,
But I would food, and would not die alone.
My master says, Since work you can no more,
Go to the fields and die ! Would I were dead ! "
The tears ran down her cheeks. Have you no child,
Poor Canda, then, I said, to care for you ?
" None, none ; on Guinea's coast my children
stayed.

To white man's land I came alone. There 's none
To care for Canda ! "

(*Raising his voice.*) Such are your mis'ries,
Ye sable sons of Africa ! and will
Ye tamely bear them ? slaves are ye then, both
In soul and body.

Slaves, in loud cries.

No ! no ! freedom we
Will have !

ALPHONSE.

Vain is your boast, for coward blood
Runs in your veins ! When this tongue is silent
Basely will ye return to servile toil ;
Luxuries provide the white, being denied
The bread your little ones demand !
Clothe him with finest stuffs, yourselves in rags
Which scarcely cover ye : furnish for him
costly couch,
Yours the hard plank : yield to him the labor
Of your youth, your life, and when useless grown,
To be cast off, like superannuated
Brutes, to die unsuccoured.

Slaves throw down their implements of labor.

Rather die now !
We 'll have the white man's blood ! Give us a
leader !

ALPHONSE.

In me behold him. Your wrongs are mine. Trust
To my care your lives and liberty, dearer
Than my own.

SLAVES.

Long live Alphonse, our chief.

ALPHONSE.

Trust
To me, friends ; my plan is laid ; hundreds are
gained
And ready to strike the blow. Midnight hour
Will see us master of yon castle gates.
The sleep that settles this night on the eyes
Of our oppressors, shall know no waking !

SLAVES.

Huzza, huzza ! freedom ! freedom ! freedom !
Long live Alphonse, our chief !

ALPHONSE.

Good friends, forbear

These cries ; else may destruction rest on us
And on our dearest hopes. I must away ;
When night begins to fall, meet me yonder,

(*Pointing.*)

Where the lofty palmist rears its head, there
Shall you hear all ; and till then be silent
As the grave.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

Saloon. Baroness of Belfont alone, sitting on a sofa, in a thoughtful attitude.

BARONESS.

Wherfore the gloom that like incubus sits
So heavy at my heart ; vainly I sought
By the sweet strains that never failed to charm,
In the enchanting measure of the dance,
In the smooth, racy jest, and merry laugh
Of cavalier and dame, to drive away
The melancholy fiend. 'T is vain ! The thought
With added force returns : One there exists

To whom I must account. My feast, this day,
Zelia refused to grace ; sacred command
She plead. Divine the Power which can prevail
With one so young, to hide from the admiring gaze,
Such charms as hers. My nephew, too, displeasure
On his brow, took hasty leave, when revelry
Commenced with joyous song. How can this be ?
It is unnatural in such young years
To — Ha ! Zelia and my nephew !

(Enter Augustus and Zelia.)

ZELIA.

I come,
Dear Lady, to pray you excuse, for what
May seem you ill. Not in discourtesy
Did I, this day, decline the honor of
Your feast ; but my heart has other customs
Learned.

AUGUSTUS.

I, too, dear aunt, crave pardon.

BARONESS.

Nephew,

Methinks you might have spared offence : to me
Small matter, for my mind is sad : yet much
I marvel, that you can forego the life
Pleasure holds out to youth.

AUGUSTUS.

Ah, dearest aunt !

Have you not travell'd the enchanted ground,
Rifled the sweets of pleasure, drank of her cup
Circean ? What then ? her fruits most luscious,
Are they not at core armed with cruel points*
That wound the taster ? And the nectarous draught,
Has it not bitter in its sediment ?

BARONESS.

I would, Augustus, I could answer nay :
I cannot ! But perchance it is in wealth

* Referring to a fruit in those Islands, of beautiful exterior, with sharp thorns attached to the core or seed-vessel, that wound those who are tempted to taste it.

Thou seekest bliss ? if so, to add to thine
I have such store might satisfy the wish
Of Crœsus. Thou art my heir, content thee.

AUGUSTUS.

Riches 't is true possess their value ; but how much ?
Can they buy friendship for the lonely heart ;
Or bring they comfort in affliction's hour ?
Do they pluck anguish from the couch of pain ;
Or will they draw the sting from sharp remorse ?
Can they bribe death for one short hour of life ?
Ah ! can they purchase Heaven ?

BARONESS.

They cannot :
Yet is not earth without its good. If gold
Be trash, and riches do take wing, still fame
Is solid, good and lasting. To be famed
For beauty, honor, wisdom, must give bliss.

AUGUSTUS.

Let Beauty speak. Its bloom and fragrance rare
Fade in the sun and waste upon the breeze,

And time, the pilferer, leaves it not a charm.

Beauty that 's past, like sear and faded flowers,
Is gone : the hearts it gained, will fly to charms
Newer and brighter.

Let the illustrious,
Proclaim their victories. O'er midnight lamps
They 've toiled, in tented fields they 've bled, and
found
The good they sought ; but what is it ? listen :
Vanity and vexation are inscribed
On all : fools have done as much as we, and
Praise is but breath, passing like summer breeze,
Rippling the ocean but to toss a straw,
The next hour 't is still, and the straw moves not :
Thus with fame. Shall we cater then for joys
Of sense, with them to feed the mind ? seeking
Its high ambition to content, with praise
Of mortals ; persuade the noble Reason
That dust is treasure ? never.

BARONESS.

Then, whither go,
With the fond yearning of th' unsated soul ?
How satisfy the longing of the heart,
That sought for happiness from every breeze
Or gleam of sunshine, calling it good,
Substantial good ? I sought it from the world
And in myself, but vainly sought : where then
Shall I seek happiness ?

ZELIA.

In God alone, the source
Of good, we find the spring of joy unfailing.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

Path to the seashore, shaded with vines and flowering shrubs. Augustus and Zelia.

ZELIA.

Happiness !

Earth is full of it ; so light within me

Sits my spirit, I seem to move on air :
Mere words, a vehicle for thought too heavy.

AUGUSTUS.

Add to them wings of music, dearest ;
And while the path we thread to the cottage
Of pious Lawton, it will calm thy thought
Love, to pour it out in song.

ZELIA.

Willingly,
If thus it please thee.

(*She sings.*)

How pleasant to breathe the opening buds,
That perfume the softening gale ;
And sweet to rove where the summer floods
Wind through the leafy vale :
There with the friend we love, to stray,
While watching the gentle swell
Of the silvery wave, and list to the lay
Of the evening bird, as she sings farewell
To the gorgeous sovereign of day.

And pleasant the sound of the hallowed bell,
That tells of the hour of prayer ;
And pleasant the sound of the organ's deep swell
And the hymn as it bursts on the ear.
But sweeter far with the friend we love,
Away from the busy world to rove,
And walk to the house of prayer ;
We feel that our Father, who hears from above,
With blessing will meet us there.

AUGUSTUS.

True, dearest ;
Friendship 's the balm of life, the honied drop
By mercy mingled in the cup of woe ;
When wealth and beauty pass, and the world's smile
Passes with them, does friendship follow too ?
Not so ; purer and warmer far its flame :
Glowing within the heart in sorrow's hour.
The world too joyous, flies the couch of pain ;
Friendship is there, to pillow on its breast

The aching head. Such friend to me, thou 'lt be
My Zelia ! and I, such friend to thee.

(*Sings.*)

Should old Time, with heavy pace,
Wear furrows in thy lovely face,
Brushing away its bloom and grace,
 Grief nigh thee,
 Earth fly thee,
Still love's immortal smile, Time cannot chase.

(*Both sing.*)

Then by the stream of life borne down,
In other's bliss, ourselves we crown ;
Pass lightly by the world's cold frown,
 Side by side
 May we glide,
'Scaping all storms, safe to the port of rest.

SCENE IV.

Seashore ; Cottage, negroes outside, in the attitude of worship ; among them is Zamba, in deep attention. Mr Lawton standing at the porch. Augustus and Zelia, at a little distance, approaching the cottage.

ZELIA.

See, there he stands, in meek humility ;
Lifting up holy hands with fervent prayer,
Prayer for the sinful, sorrowful, and weak.

AUGUSTUS.

Ah, what a prayer was that ! it seemed as Heaven
Drew near to earth, and God was there to hear.
And was he not ? sure from his dwelling-place
High in the heavens, he looks on man below,
And listens when his servants plead. Their tears
He gathers up, sending down showers of grace,
To water seed they sow in sadness here.
Listen we to the message.

(*They approach the porch.*)

MR. LAWTON (*speaks to the slaves*).

My children !

Hear the words from Heaven, speaking good-will.
Burdened are ye ? Sweet rest to you they bring ;
Rest in your God from sorrow, guilt, despair.
Hungry are ye ? Here is the bread of life.
Thirsty ? A spring from the fount eternal,
Sends out pure water ; drink, and live for ever.
Are ye in want ? Treasure is freely given,
Treasure unfailing ; more than the whole store
From old Golconda's mine : the pearl of price,
More precious than the product, all amassed
Of ocean in its twice ten thousand caves.
Enslaved are ye ? the jubilee is come,
The price is paid ; return ye ransomed ones.
Do bitter sorrows press around the heart ?
Come, then, and cast them at the feet of Him,
Who bore our sorrows and who shares our griefs.
No friend have you ? He is a friend unfailing ;

Brother is not so near, mother so kind.
No home ? Look then away from earth, see, far
Beyond the confines of this narrow world,
Higher than yonder stars and the pure sky,
A dwelling is prepared, in which the light
Of our own sun would be but darkness ; for
It is lighted by the smile of Him, who,
In light unconceived, doth dwell. My friends ;
Such is the home prepared in Heaven, for those
Who love and serve the blessed Son of God.
There tears are shed no more, and every chain
Is broken.

Poor wanderer ! frail, guilty, desolate ;
Tossed by the storm and destin'd to the tomb ;
To-day art here, to-morrow in the dust !
Wilt thou reject life, purity, and bliss ? —
And choose — *(He pauses in emotion.)*

(Zamba shows great agitation.)

AUGUSTUS (*aside, to Zelia*).

Angels weep thus o'er sinning men.

MR. LAWTON (*continues*).

Fear not, ye little flock ; your father wills
A kingdom to bestow : Soon shall your labors
cease ;

The fight of faith be won, the crown bestowed.
Your mansion is prepared ; a few more tears,
A few more sighs, your Saviour calls you home ;
Press on, look upwards, and obtain the prize !

(*Hymn sung by a chorus of voices.*)

How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the beams of rising day ;
How sweet the gush of bubbling fountains,
In the thirsty traveller's way.

How beautiful upon the mountains
Is the messenger of peace !
And sweeter far than gushing fountains
Are the messages of grace.

To the mind, in darkness straying,
Bright the light of Truth appears ;
Upon the heart, where sorrow 's preying,
How the Gospel's comfort cheers.

To the tempted and forsaken
Sweet it is bright Hope to bring ;
To the soul by guilt o'ertaken
Doubly sweet of Grace to sing.

(*The negroes with reverence salute Mr. Lawton and retire. Augustus and Zelia advance towards the cottage and meet them. They speak in kind and cheerful tone to the slaves.*)

Good evening, friends, good evening to you all :
Glad are we to see ye.

ZAMBA (*aside*).

Wretched Zamba !

Friend, say they ? O most accursed traitor !

More blasting to me than the lightning's bolt,
Their looks so gentle and their words so kind.

AUGUSTUS (*to the slaves*).

'T is well employed, good friends, thus to attend
The pious counsels of yon holy man.
His words are words of truth, and point out good ;
Good here below and happiness in Heaven.

ZAMBA (*aside*).

And to lost Zamba misery in hell !

SLAVE.

Thanks, dear Lord and Lady : blessings on you.
Thanks unto God our Father who didst give
Us such kind friends. Thanks for the Gospel too
And for this holy man. But more than all
Thanks for the blessed Saviour : for sinners
Like us he died. May we love God, and man,
Work faithfully, and when we die ascend
To Heaven !

(*Exeunt slaves, ascending the hill. Zamba retires
among the trees and falls on his knees.*)

ZELIA.

My heart, Augustus, is now full of joy ;

Another drop would make it overflow.

O ! that the Lady Belfont might discover

The only source of joy, and taste the stream

Flowing from this Fount : Love to God, and

To our neighbour Love. This incorporate

With the love of self ; taking rise in Grace,

Fills up the channels made by human woe,

Expands in a broad flood, that flows

Through earth and heaven.

(*Mr. Lawton, approaching from the cottage, meets*

Augustus and Zelia.)

MR. LAWTON.

Lady, good eve ; permit

My welcome of the Lord Clermont, with thanks

For this attendance on our worship.

AUGUSTUS.

Thanks

Would I pay to you, revered and worthy Sir,
For care upon these ignorant men bestowed,
More wretched made through ignorance and sin
Than by their servitude. I hail the day
Auspicious, which to minds benighted, brings
The light of Truth, and to those enslaved
Redemption : distant or near 't is bright. Beams
Of celestial glory alone outshine
Its radiance. Then, sin restrained, woe in
A fearful deluge shall cease o'er men to sweep.
Mercy and Justice, Love and Peace, the fruits
Of Eden's bowers, shall refresh once more
The human family. The chain that binds
The captive, body or soul, struck by the
Sledge of Truth, shall shiver into atoms ;
And man, rising from his thraldom, sing,
In chorus with the Angels, the Anthem
Of Liberty !

Enter Count De Nouville.

COUNT.

What do I hear, and see !

Augustus, thou ! and Zelia ! in discourse
Most treasonable, with a low dastard,
Who, with base intent to undermine
The fealty of our people, has landed
In this Isle ; not openly, but in treacherous
Privacy, has footing gained. Dark hints
I have just heard, of insurrection, and,
Questioning the faithful servitor of
The Lady Belfont, from Alphonse, I heard
Of nightly haunts of slaves, within this hut,
Inhabited by this mischievous man !

(*To Mr. Lawton.*)

Whence came you, and by what authority
Are you here ?

MR. LAWTON.

My lord, as fitly might

I question by what right you such demand
Make of me. Have I not liberty to go
And come as likes me ? May I not dwell here
Or there as suits me ? But pardon reply,
I not in rudeness meant, though made to question
Most ungracious. Then, this my answer ;
By His authority, who gave command,
That until time shall end, his servants do,
To every soul of man, th' eternal truth,
And gospel of His grace, proclaim.
By such authority I came.

COUNT.

No more !

False man, I 'll hear no more ; away ! To lure
The simple and to draw the gold from fools,
And women, is thy trade. Holla there ; guards !
I 'll teach this man devout, that e'er he thus
Practise his subtile arts, a grant he show
From other power.

AUGUSTUS (*to the guards*).

Hold ! at your peril, hold !

Dare not to lay unhallowed hand on him,
Who comes ambassador from the High Court,
Which soon must try, both you, and me, and all.
My house his home, his safe asylum, be :
A temple where our God shall be adored.
The centre from which truth shall emanate,
Shedding forth radiant beams on our dark Isle.

COUNT.

Peace, peace, rash youth ! The vengeance of the
Church
May on your head be brought for heresy.
Vain is your boast of power ; for you depend
In person and possessions yet on me.
Your father's friend will pass as though unheard,
The warmth of wild enthusiasm : stir not
Then my wrath.

AUGUSTUS.

My father's friend

I most duly honor ; still more, in him
Beholding the parent of my Zelia,
By him permitted to call mine, thus he
My father. These dear ties justly claim
My gratitude, my duty, love : but the debt
I owe unto my Saviour, God, cancel
They not ; annul not to Him allegiance,
Nor constrain me in his cause my interest
To disown, and on his name to suffer
Such foul reproach.

COUNT.

Infatuated boy,
Once more forbear ; presume not on my love.
Your duty, guards.

(*Guards approach the missionary.*)

ZELIA.

Father, do not this deed :
Sin not thus against God. With impunity
Upon this man your hand cannot be laid.
His wrong will be avenged.

COUNT.

O, grief, madness !

Words cannot express my shame and anger.

Zelia, my daughter, to me thus lost ! O,
How distorted now that mind, where fond hope
Pictured out the image of her who bore thee.
In thee I sought the joyousness that won my
Early love. O cruel disappointment,
Thus to find my heart's best treasure !

(*To Mr. Lawton.*)

'T is you,
Or such as you, have blasted my best hopes,
Have robbed declining years of happiness.
May every curse —

ZELIA.

My father, curse him not.

COUNT.

I will curse him ; my slaves he 's tampered with,
Until in mutiny they rise. They e'en

Destroy each other ! Of my cattle, scarce
One is left. Perchance us to rob of life
They at this moment plot.

(*To the guards.*)

Bear him away
Unto the pavilion, and let the slave
Zamba be his watch this night.

ZELIA (*to Augustus.*)

Now to the Lord
Who giveth help, let us look up !

AUGUSTUS (*to Mr. Lawton.*)

Good Sir,
All that a youth can do, count you upon.

MR. LAWTON.

Receive my thanks, young friends. Your laws for-
bid

My mission ; to them resistance would be
Wrong. Welcome are these bonds ; I receive them
With joy, as tokens of the honor, which

On me is conferred : counted worthy
To suffer in the cause dearer to me
Than life. I go, led by Him on whom my hope
Is stayed. Be it to prison, his presence
There will bless ; be it to death, for ever
Shall I be with Him !

(*Exit.*)

ZAMBA (*starts up from among the shrubs*).

To him will I go,
This blessed man ! unbind him, set him free !
If ever upon man the Christian's God
Has set his image, it is on this man.
My heart is bound to him : I 'll to his feet,
And pour out all my soul. I could almost
Adore him. From crime he yet may save me.
To my post let me fly. God of Christians,
Aid me !

(*Exit.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Midnight. The Count De Nouville's chamber. A lamp burning. The Count in agitation walking the room.*

COUNT.

O, torture indescribable !

If there be hell, within my breast it burns !

If a just God, how terrible the thought !

Wretch then am I, beyond all hope and help.

What have I done ? what can it be, but guilt,

That now with anguish makes my heart o'erflow.

I can endure no more.

My weeping child ! noble Augustus too !

I would not hear. Minister of Heaven ! yes,

Such he seemed ; and O ! the look he gave of mute

Reproach as he followed. I cannot bear

To think that I, the Count De Nouville, should

Heap base insult on a man, and such a man !
Shame burns my cheek ; my heart is torn ; is 't
guilt ?

What is guilt ? I neyer thought of it, but
When I felt the wrong that others did me,
And punished it. Is not he guilty, this man ?
My heart says not : then am I unjust. This
Can I acknowledge ? confess myself at fault !
O, that were mean. How can I bow to man ?
Yet am I not amenable to One
Above me ? I feel it so. Already
The sting I bear within me on myself
Turns, piercing my very soul. Is this all ?
If, for a single crime, the penalty
Death is imposed by man upon his fellow,
Then must death eternal be inflicted
For crimes innumerable against God.
Like waves they rise and swell, my sins, my sins !

(*He sinks on a sofa, covering his face. Zamba enters softly, stands contemplating his master, then kneels before him.*)

ZAMBA.

Look up, my master ! see one at your feet
Whom pride and passion made your deadliest foe.
Mercy I crave from Heaven, from you. This hour,
This very hour, my guilty hand prepared
To shed your blood ; cut down the loveliest flower
E'er bloomed in noble house, your Zelia.

COUNT (*starting up*).

Execrable monster ! thou art the fiend
Come to torment me now. Out of my sight !
But no ! seize him ! where are my domestics ?

ZAMBA.

My lord, from Zamba nothing need you fear,
I come to save you. Here is my poignard :
Use it upon me when you doubt my truth.
The slaves are rising.

COUNT.

How sayest thou ? rising !

Alphonse spoke truth then, and the wretch Lawton,
A villain is and hypocrite.

ZAMBA.

Not so.

The villain is Alphonse ! By ambition
Urged, the slaves he practised on, and I, most
Miserable wretch, driven by revenge, I
Promised to give him aid. But he, my lord,
Of whom you speak, is innocent. Through him
I come to save, if it be not too late,
Your house and you. His word, the word of God,
Whom he doth serve, like an arrow pierced
The proud heart of Zamba. Appointed
His guard this night, I entered his prison
And told him all my guilt. He bade me fly
To you, confess my crime, my penitence.
“ God,” said the holy man, “ who sees the heart,

Abhors deceit ; with sin concealed therein,
He will not pardon." With lightning's speed I
came,
First liberating him ; and he is gone
The pious slaves to assemble ; hoping that
His influence may quell this insurrection.

COUNT.

I am confounded with my own folly !

And thee —

(*Shouts without.*)

Ha ! what mean those shouts ? come
they — the —
O my daughter ! I fly to thy succour.

ZAMBA.

Trust me,
My master ; the slave Zamba will be true.
Remain within your chamber, for rebels
Are everywhere ; safety is not without.
Hither will I conduct the lady Zelia,
By this private way.

COUNT.

Take thy weapon ; in
Her defence thou 'lt need it ; and Heaven speed
thee.

(*Exit Zamba.*)

How can I call on Heaven in my need ?
Which all my prosperous and happy days
Passed unacknowledged ? Mercy ! O mercy !
On my aged head. Mercy upon my child !

(*Noise increases.*)

My poor people ! Zamba, much abused !
Pardon, pardon, your wretched master.
And yonder holy man, servant of God ! —

(*Female shrieks without.*)

O ! God of mercy hear me, when I vow
To give to thee my wealth, my child, myself.
Save us in this hour !

SCENE II.

Bedchamber. Zelia in a loose dress. Shouts without.

ZELIA.

Ha ! again ! another and another !

Nora, my nurse, why do you tarry thus ?

(*Enter Nora running.*)

NORA.

Haste, lady ; throw this robe around you ; come.

ZELIA.

But whither, Nora ? why do you tremble ?

And these shouts, what mean they ? quick, O tell
me.

NORA.

Zamba I met within the passage ; he
Bade me use despatch ; — my lady hasten
To the Count's chamber, which faithful Zamba
Guards.

ZELIA.

Nora, explain. Why to my father ?

Zamba guards the door : wherefore ? and these
shouts ? —

Say, quick !

NORA (*in a low impressive tone*).

The slaves are risen to murder you !

Murder the whites !

ZELIA.

Now God of mercy shield !

(Enter Baroness of Belfont, and Augustus, by an
opposite door.)

AUGUSTUS.

Thus far safe ; recline thee on this couch ; now
Must I away. Zelia, dearest, see thou
To the Lady of Belfont, and stir not
Hence, upon your peril.

ZELIA.

Augustus, stay ;
What means this frightful tumult, this report
Of insurrection ? tell me.

AUGUSTUS.

From deep sleep

This night was I awaked by Zamba. “ Fly,
Fly,” he said, “ and save the Lady Belfont.
To the chamber of Lady Zelia guide her.
The slaves, conducted by Alphonse, revolt.
Lawton is freed, and hastes to seek for aid
Among his little flock. Go you to him ;
I, to defend the Count De Nouville.”
He said, and darted from me ; then shielded
By the orange grove, hither, my aunt,
Conducted I to thee ; those most loved
Being united, claim undivided thought.
Beloved ones, I go.

ZELIA.

Go not, I pray !

AUGUSTUS.

Useless here my presence, dearest, my blood
In such defence, I would not spare.

ZELIA.

Yet stay,
Augustus ; to my father take us ;
This passage, by Zamba guarded, leads
To his chamber ; thither, for greater safety,
Guide us.

AUGUSTUS (*raising the Baroness, who is kneeling*).

Come then, dear aunt, arise ! let us away ;
Hasten we ! (*A loud crash without.*)
Ha ! they burst the outer door !
Quick ! fly we to the Count !

BARONESS.

Help us, O God !
The time is come when other help is vain.
Right were you, Zelia : to the truth I bow.
Mercy ! O God. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

A hall. Zamba, guarding the entrance to the Count's chamber. Alphonse, with armed negroes, bursts in.

ALPHONSE.

Ha, Zamba ! where didst hide thyself ? I sought
But vainly for thee. Hast administered
The poison ? Ah, I see, thou dost enter
The chamber of the Count, — soon Count no more.
How now ! silent, eh ! what 's this ! treachery ?
Have at thee, then ; thou diest !

(*Draws his sword on Zamba.*)

ZAMBA (*in an attitude of defence*).

Hear me, Alphonse.

ALPHONSE.

I will not hear thee, traitor !

ZAMBA.

But a word :

There is a Power, Alphonse ; and you and I

Must bow before it. Already conscience
In me accuser —

ALPHONSE.

Ha ! ha ! thou preachest.
Hast been to yon conventicle ? well, well,
Content thee now ; a chaplain will I have
Within my palace, to say mass, or prayers.
Pass we into the chamber ; come, undo the door.

ZAMBA.

Not so ; I prithee now, Alphonse, return
And quell this tumult. All may yet be well
And pardoned, —

ALPHONSE.

Pardoned ! say'st thou so, base slave ?
Coward ! thou hast spoken, this I pardon not ;
Take that, and that, slave !

(*He rushes on Zamba ; they fight.*)

(*Enter from the passage Augustus, Baroness, Zelia,
and Nora.*

AUGUSTUS (*to Alphonse, striking him with his sword*).

And thou, villain, that !

ALPHONSE (*to the armed slaves*).

Here are they all ; the lady Belfont,
The heir, the heiress, whites, foes to our race ;
Be brave, and finish this night's tragedy ;
To-morrow ye are free. Come on, and act
Like valiant men.

ZELIA (*advancing to the slaves*).

Friends, I see among you
Some I have succoured, tended in sickness.
I have fed your little ones, have been your friend.
Me would you injure ? I believe it not.
See, I trust you.

(*Advancing nearer to them, they draw back irresolute.*)

ALPHONSE.

Listen not to her ;

It is to flatter you and beg for life,
Now ye have power. Come, here is plunder,
precious

Gold, this ye shall have. Come on, fear not
The whites ; we 'll crush them, and the scourge
never

More shall ye feel.

(*Aside.*) So ! I goad them there.

They like not this discourse of scourge.

(*To them.*) Come, strike !

(*Slaves rush forward.*)

BARONESS.

Mercy ! mercy ! Alphonse, you, my brother !

ALPHONSE.

Ha, Baronne ! do you thus confess ? 't is well ;
I now would have the part which to me falls
Of goods, my father left, you sole enjoying.
Render them up, Lady !

BARONESS.

Spare me, Alphonse !

And take what part you will.

ALPHONSE.

I will have all.

(*Raises his sword to strike the Baroness.*)

BARONESS (*rushing back*).

O, mercy ! mercy ! Heaven defend me now !

(*Zamba, placing himself before her, engages*

Alphonse. Augustus defends Zelia.)

COUNT (*entering armed, from the chamber*).

My child ! my friends ! to die with you I come,

Or help defend !

ALPHONSE.

Now have at him ! Huzza !

We 'll have them all : let our oppressors fall.

SLAVES (*who rush with raised weapons upon the*

Count, shouting).

Revenge ! revenge ! Let our oppressors fall !

(*Enter Mr. Lawton with armed negroes, who surround*

and disarm the insurgents.)

MR. LAWTON.

God, in this hour of need,
Doth succour send.

ALPHONSE (*raising his sword over the head of the Count.*)

My arm shall hinder it.

ZAMBA (*arrests the stroke, by piercing the breast of Alphonse.*)

Die, if it must be ! though spare thee I would.

ALPHONSE (*to Zamba*).

Traitor ! thou hast conquered ; O death ! (*Dies.*)

COUNT.

Thanks, thanks !

Where begin, where end them ? I am o'erwhelmed.

AUGUSTUS.

To Him, who saved us in this fearful hour,
Be praise first offered.

BARONESS.

With reverence
And love, Him would I praise, while sound sits on

These lips. Hope, in my heart with trembling
enters,
Of pardon, for my past forgetfulness ;
May mercy now its blessed earnest be.

ZELIA.

O ! blessed evil, bringing forth such good.

COUNT.

Virtue and truth triumphant in this hour
Shall o'er us reign for ever. Zamba, friend !
No more a slave, as nature's freeman honor
I thee, preserver of my house : this debt
My means can never cancel. Injured much
Wast thou, but God avenged thee. On my head,
Like coals of living fire, hast thou, for wrongs,
Rewarded benefits. Forgiveness prove
By the acceptance of my friendship here.

ZAMBA.

Bonds stronger than my former chains unite
Me to your house. My lord, you henceforth

May command the heart and hand of Zamba.

God that heart has changed : with heart, with hand,
With tongue I 'll serve him ever.

COUNT (*to Mr. Lawton*).

To you, what shall I say, who, sent by Heaven,
I met with injury both deep and base ?
Seeking my good, the good of these poor souls,
I meant you harm. Shame stains my cheek while
thus

Your wrongs I own.

MR. LAWTON.

My lord, think not on them,
But on the Friend, who died that you, and I,
And all who trust in Him might ever live :
By whose help the ills of life enduring,
We pass to joys eternal. Led by Him,
Press onward to the prize, of conquest sure :
The young and old, high born and low, master
And slave, admitted to the lists, contend.

This world is not the end of our being.
Life is a journey ; all its stages marked
By Wisdom infinite. Following
Such Leader, be it e'en through flood or flame,
The City of our Rest triumphant shall
We enter. There all ranks are equal : Love
Reigns eternally.

COUNT.

Here also let it reign
In us.

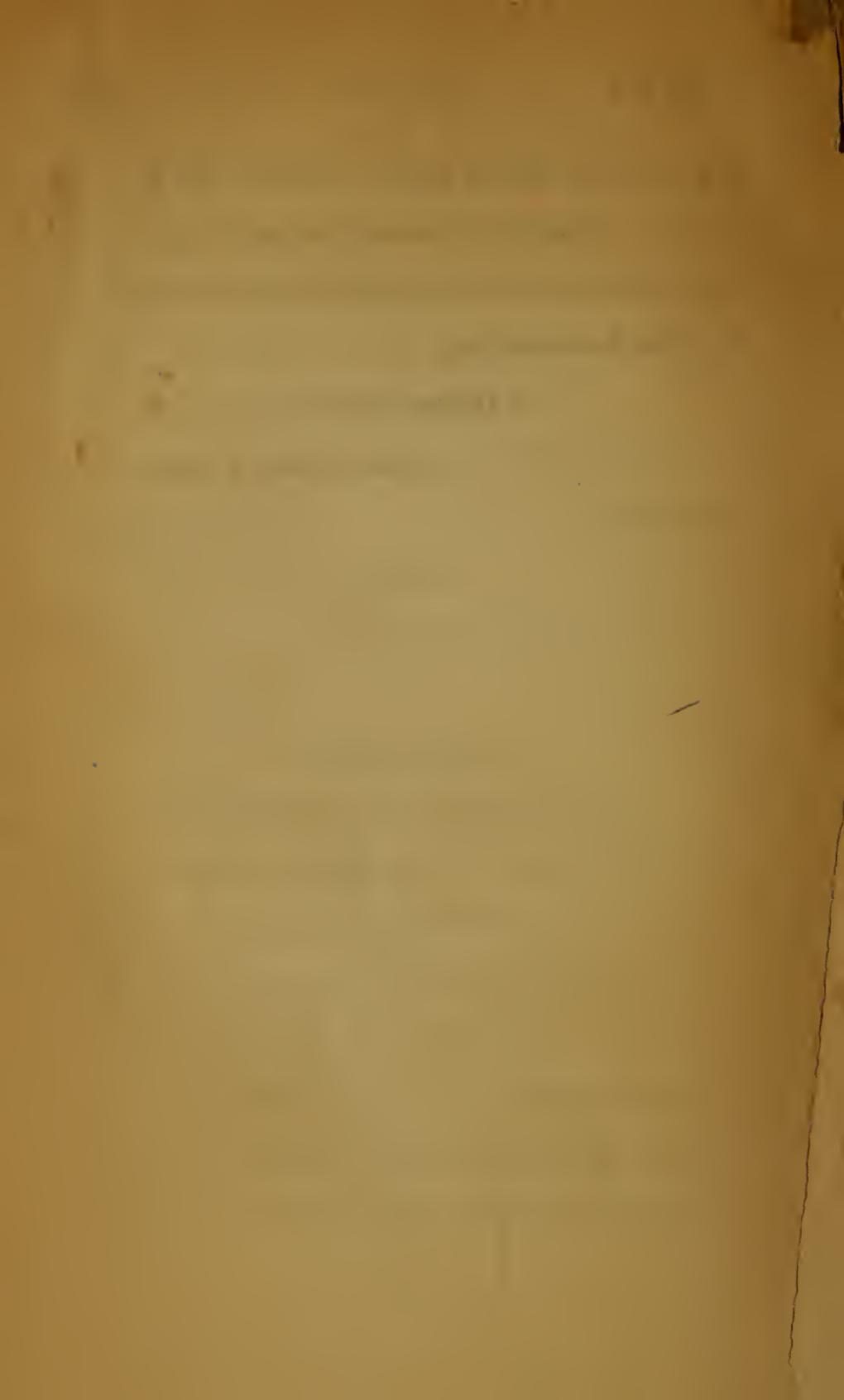
(*To the slaves.*)

My friends ! yes doubly are ye so :
My friends, by service this night rendered ;
And by the service we will jointly pay
To the Great Master unto whom we owe,
I and ye all, the service of the heart,
And lip, and life. Much have I this night learned
Of these my duties ; much still I hope to learn,
And hope you all will learn, from that good man,

To whom our debt is large. I would make it
Larger. Bankrupt, it rests upon my Surety.
Debts immense to God, to man ruin involving,
By Him are cancelled !

(*To Mr. Lawton.*)

He will repay you, —
I can never.



ZAMBA,

OR

THE INSURRECTION.

..

A DRAMATIC POEM,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

MRS. ELIZABETH RICORD,

AUTHOR OF "ELEMENTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND APPLIED
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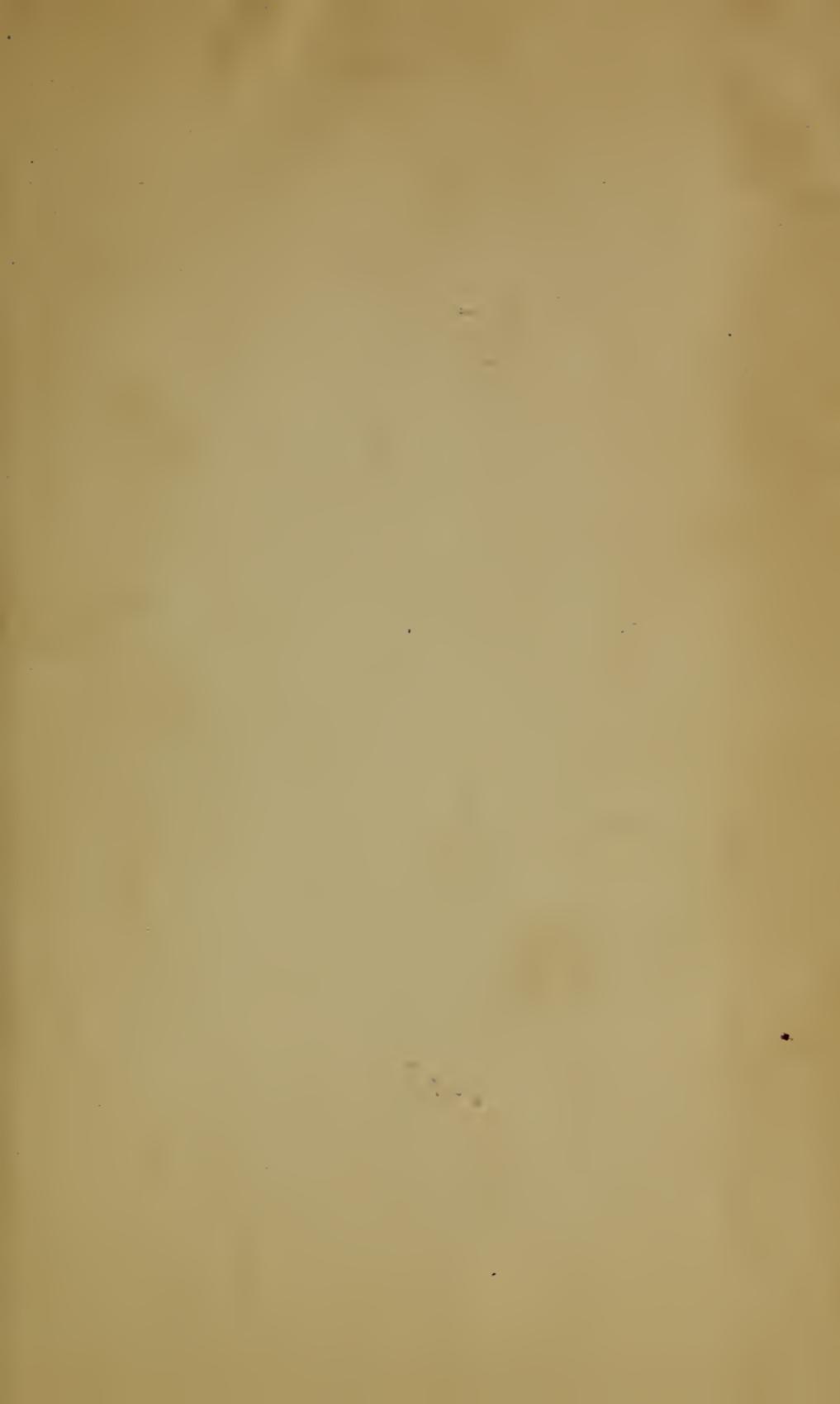


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